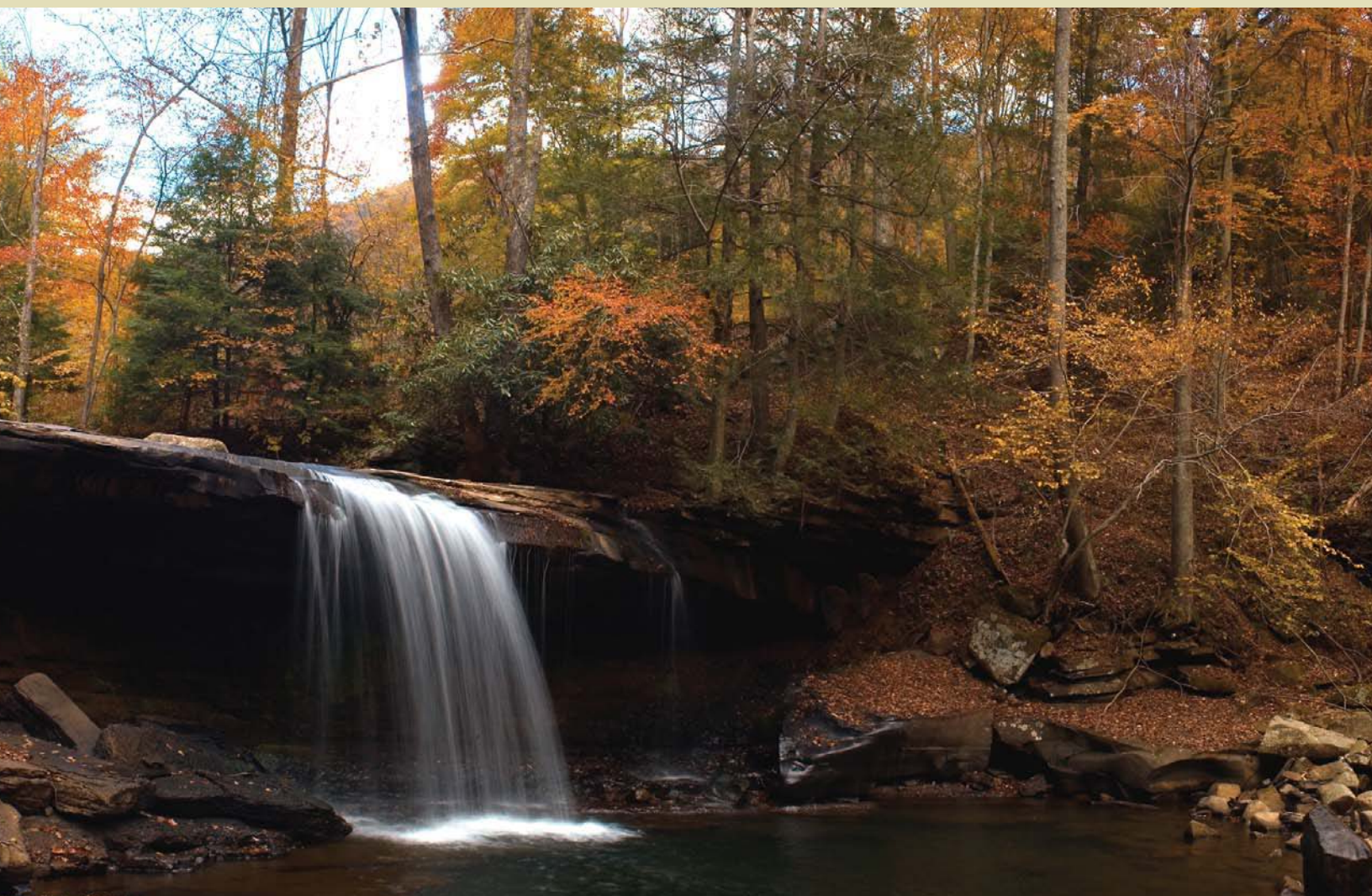




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## 2 Alternatives





*A riparian zone that is biologically diverse and contains globally rare communities.*



*The waters of the New River system contain a mosaic of hydrologic features and aquatic habitats, support a unique aquatic ecosystem, and nourish a riparian zone that supports rare plants, animals and communities.*



*A highly productive aquatic ecosystem includes a broad array of aquatic life.*

*Opposite side: Claypool Falls – one of the park's many riverine hydrologic features.*

## 2.0 Alternatives

### 2.1 Introduction

A range of long-term management alternatives are possible for New River Gorge National River that would achieve the park's purpose, protect its fundamental and other important resources and values, and realize the vision for its future. Working cooperatively with its partners the NPS has developed, evaluated, and compared five reasonable management alternatives. This chapter of the GMP/EIS presents the five alternatives, compares their impacts and costs, and identifies the preferred alternative. Data used to compare their impacts – or what would happen if each alternative was adopted – are summarized from the detailed environmental impact analysis presented in Chapter 4 below, prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The alternatives include a “status quo” alternative – referred to as Alternative 1 Continuation of Current Management – and four action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5). The Continuation of Current Management Alternative provides the baseline for comparing the impacts of implementing the action alternatives.

Each action alternative includes a management strategy composed of the following elements:

- an overall management concept (summarized in Table 2.1)
- a set of organizing principles (summarized in Table 2.2)
- management zoning (identification of areas where potential resource conditions and visitor experience opportunities would be emphasized)
- a summary of management actions that respond to the issues and concerns raised during project scoping
- proposed hunting and biking management strategies
- management prescriptions for specific areas of the park (description of the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences, as well as the actions necessary to achieve those conditions and experiences)

Common to the action alternatives are the following additional elements:

- parkwide desired conditions and management strategies to accomplish those conditions throughout the park
- proposed boundary modifications to address park operational and management issues

Implicit in all the alternatives are the NPS management actions implemented as part of routine park management pursuant to the *NPS Management Policies* (NPS 2006a)

and applicable laws, regulations, and servicewide mandates and policies (summarized in Appendix B below).

### **2.1.1 Development of Alternatives**

Development of the GMP alternatives occurred through a progression of planning steps used by the NPS to prepare GMPs for all units of the national park system, as outlined in the *NPS General Management Planning Dynamic Sourcebook* (NPS 2008b). The park's GMP Planning Team led the process, conducting many internal planning workshops, and hosting frequent collaborative work sessions with other interested parties, including the full park staff, the general public, local governments, civic organizations, park user groups, and various federal, state, and local agencies (see chronology of public involvement and agency coordination activities in Section 5.1 below).

The process initially focused on developing the park's *Foundation for Planning* (NPS 2009). This summarized what is most important about the park and provided the basic guidance for management decisions made at the park. The NPS hosted public meetings in January 2006 to obtain public comment on the proposed statements of the park's purpose, significance, fundamental and other important resources and values, and interpretive themes as part of developing the *Foundation for Planning* (NPS 2009).

The planning process then turned to identifying management issues and concerns and developing a long-term vision for the park. The NPS invited the public to assist with these tasks at three sets of public meetings, held in February, March, and May 2006. Five categories of issues emerged related to resource management, visitor experience and use, working with local communities, land protection, and partnerships (see Section 1.9.2 above). The GMP Planning Team also crafted a 2028 Vision Statement for the park which summarizes what the NPS, its partners, and the public would like the park to be like in 20 years (see Section 1.8 above).

The GMP Planning Team subsequently considered strategies to address the planning issues and concerns and to accomplish the long-term vision for the park. From this emerged the overall management concepts for the action alternatives considered in this GMP/EIS. Three action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3 and 4) were initially presented to the public for comment at a set of public meetings in July 2006 and made available for comment on the park's website. Many people suggested that they would like to combine aspects of the three alternatives, notably asking for an alternative that includes an emphasis on backcountry preservation and historic resource themes, a through park route, and an emphasis on river gateways and working with communities. The NPS subsequently developed a fourth action alternative (Alternative 5) that addressed those concerns.

In the summer of 2007 the GMP Planning Team circulated a newsletter that summarized the five action alternatives and hosted a fifth set of meetings to obtain public comment on the revised alternatives. At that time additional management proposals were also presented for public review and comment related to wilderness designation, hunting, and biking in the park. Public comments received at the meetings provided guidance for further refinement of the action alternatives that are described and compared in this GMP/DEIS.

### 2.1.2 Identification of the Preferred Alternative

The NPS has identified **Alternative 5** as the preferred alternative to guide long-term management of New River Gorge National River. This decision is based on the comparison of alternatives summarized in this GMP/DEIS, public comments received during the planning process, and findings of the “Choosing By Advantages” process.

Full implementation of the approved plan could be many years in the future. Implementation will depend on future NPS funding levels and service-wide priorities, and on partnership funds, time, and effort. Approval of the GMP/EIS does not guarantee that funding or staffing for proposed actions will be available. Implementation of specific projects associated with the selected long-term management alternative will require detailed implementation planning and further analysis of impacts pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

#### ■ Findings of Comparison of Alternatives

Analysis of the environmental consequences of the alternatives supports selection of Alternative 5 as the preferred alternative. Following is a summary of the comparison of alternatives based on findings presented in detail in Chapter 4 of this GMP/EIS:

- All action alternatives would contribute local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts in all impact categories; by comparison the continuation of current management would result in minor to moderate beneficial impacts in all impact categories
- All action alternatives would result in major beneficial impacts to natural and scenic resources, primarily as a result of managing large areas of the park as unfragmented backcountry forest and implementing a set of desired conditions that would guide development of targeted strategies to protect and improve the park’s significant natural and scenic resources; Alternatives 2 and 5 would preserve the greatest area of unfragmented forest (approximately two-thirds of the park)
- Alternatives 2, 4, and 5 would result in major beneficial impacts to cultural resources, with Alternatives 2 and 5 providing slightly more major beneficial impacts; Alternative 5 would address the long-term preservation needs of more of the park’s cultural resources than the other alternatives

**Table 2.1 Overall Management Concepts for Alternatives 1 to 5**

Alternative	Alternative Concept Overview
<b>Alternative 1</b> <i>Continuation of Current Management</i>	<b>Alternative 1</b> is a continuation of current management and trends. The park's enabling legislation and the existing <i>General Management Plan</i> (NPS 1982) would continue to guide park management. The NPS would manage park resources and visitor use as it does today, with no major change in direction. Improvements to visitor facilities and park operations facilities would include only projects that are already approved and fully funded (see Figure 2.2). (Built aspects of this alternative would be included in the action alternatives (Alternatives 2 to 5).)
<b>Alternative 2</b> <i>Themed Gorge Segments</i>	<b>Alternative 2</b> emphasizes the substantial differences among subareas of the gorge, improving them to reflect their differing character, resources, and visitor experiences (see Figure 2.4). Management actions would build upon the cultural resource, interpretive, and recreational opportunities of the north and south ends of the park, while retaining a primitive and remote feeling in the middle of the park.
<b>Alternative 3</b> <i>Through Park Connections</i>	<b>Alternative 3</b> would unify the park by providing a north-south through park hike and bike trail that enables visitors to travel the park on singletrack trails at or near the river (see Figure 2.6). Existing scenic roads would be enhanced. New access and facilities in the middle of the park would balance opportunities for visitors throughout the park.
<b>Alternative 4</b> <i>River Gateways and Rim to River Experiences</i>	<b>Alternative 4</b> recognizes river gateways and the rim to river experiences that take visitors to them as the primary access points and orientation venues in the park (see Figure 2.8). River gateways would be enhanced to tell gorge stories while providing improved river, trail, and recreational access. The NPS and gateway communities would work cooperatively to enhance rim to river experiences.
<b>Alternative 5 (Preferred)</b> <i>Exploration Experiences</i>	<b>Alternative 5</b> would preserve areas for primitive recreational experiences from end to end of the park (see Figure 2.10). Interspersed with these primitive areas would be cultural and interpretive resource focal areas where visitors could explore communities and other places that once populated the gorge, experience the river, and enjoy a variety of recreational experiences. A north-south through the park connector composed of improved scenic roads and trails would enable visitors to travel the length of the park, visiting these areas and accessing the backcountry. Partnerships with gateway communities and improved rim to river experiences would foster links to the park as a whole and to specific cultural and interpretive resource areas within the park. Other connecting trails outside the park – made possible through partnerships – would offer visitors an opportunity to hike or bike from New River Gorge National River to the Bluestone National Scenic River, the Gauley River National Recreation Area, and other attractions in the region.

**Table 2.2 General Comparison of Alternatives**

	<b>Alternative 1</b> Continuation of Current Management	<b>Alternative 2</b> Themed Gorge Segments	<b>Alternative 3</b> Through Park Connection	<b>Alternative 4</b> River Gateways & Rim to River Experiences	<b>Alternative 5</b> Exploration Experiences
<b>New Idea and Emphasis</b>	none	cultural and interpretive focus in north and south	scenic road and trail connections that connect the park	river gateways and connections to and from them	recreational experiences interspersed with interpretive experiences
<b>Way to Unify the Park and Improve Its Image</b>	not much improvement	brand three very different segments	emphasis on through park trail and river	emphasis on river and community gateways	emphasis on through park connector and river gateways
<b>Visitor Experience</b>	varied quality	reflects theme of each segment, with very different intensity of use for each	river and trail emphasis	rim to river emphasis	broad recreation experiences with opportunities to explore park history
<b>Focus of Visitor Activities</b>	vary	most intense at north and south segments	distributed throughout the length of the park	concentrated at gateways	concentrated at river gateways and focal areas



Table 2.3 Broad Organizing Principles of the Four GMP Action Alternatives

Subject	Alternative 2 Themed Gorge Segments	Alternative 3 Through Park Connections	Alternative 4 River Gateways and Rim to River Experiences	Alternative 5 Exploration Experiences
<b>Visitor Experience</b> <b>General Principle:</b> Park programs would reflect a central theme that helps visitors better understand how the park is organized, the opportunities that are available, and how to travel in the complicated network of local roads and trails in the park's rugged terrain	Visitor experiences relating to interpretation of cultural resources would be emphasized in themed areas in the north and south ends of the park; primitive recreation would be emphasized in the middle of the park	Recreation, scenic experiences, and discovery of cultural resources would be emphasized along a new through park trail	Cultural and recreation resources and experiences would be emphasized in proximity to gateways and along rim to river trails and roads	Primitive recreation experiences would be emphasized throughout the park along a new through park connector; river gateways and focal areas would be managed for a broad variety of interpretive and recreational experiences
<b>Natural Resource Management</b> <b>General Principle:</b> Natural processes would dominate in large contiguous forest blocks that support diverse and abundant endemic and rare plant and animal communities	Throughout the middle of the park large tracts of intact forest would be managed as backcountry (68.5%) with negligible new forest fragmentation	Only the park's most intact and unfragmented forest tracts – dispersed throughout the park – would be managed as backcountry (43%) with negligible new forest fragmentation	Large tracts of intact forest removed from river gateways and primary rim to river travel routes would be managed as backcountry (60.8 %) with negligible new forest fragmentation	Large tracts of intact forest along one or both sides of the New River throughout the park would be managed as backcountry (66.4%) with negligible new forest fragmentation
<b>Cultural Resource Management</b> <b>General Principle:</b> Successful partnerships would make possible stabilization, rehabilitation, or restoration of the park's most important historic resources; interpretation would occur at restored or rehabilitated cultural resource sites or at discovery sites	Significant cultural resources in the north and south ends of the park resources would be restored or rehabilitated and adaptively reused; a few sites in the middle of the park would be managed as discovery sites	Numerous cultural resources along the Through Park Trail and in the vicinity of visitor facilities would be managed as discovery sites	Significant cultural resources in the vicinity of river gateways would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused; many sites along rim to river trails and near gateways would be managed as discovery sites	Significant cultural resources in river gateways and focal areas would be restored or rehabilitated and adaptively reused; many sites along the through park connector would be managed as discovery sites
<b>Visitor Use and Park Facilities</b> <b>General Principle:</b> Visitor facilities would be programmed and located to support the desired visitor experiences in the park's central theme; they would be designed to have minimal impact on park resources	Trails would connect major cultural sites in the north and south ends of the park  New visitor facilities would be added in the north and south ends of the park	The through park trail would connect the park from end to end; other trails would parallel the river  New visitor facilities would be added in the middle of the park	Trails would connect the rim to the river and provide access to recreation and interpretive sites in the vicinity of river gateways  New visitor facilities would be added in the vicinity of river gateways	The through park connector would connect the park from end to end; other trails would connect the rim to the river and would provide access to recreation and interpretive sites in the vicinity of river gateways  New facilities would be added in the vicinity of river gateways and in focal areas
<b>Partnerships and Cooperative Actions</b> <b>General Principle:</b> NPS, gateway communities, and private landowners in the park would work cooperatively to achieve shared goals; partnerships would achieve a seamless network of regional parks, open spaces, trails, and heritage sites in southern West Virginia that supports a vibrant tourism economy	NPS would provide technical assistance to gateway communities  NPS would expand participation in regional economic development efforts and cooperative efforts with the state parks, public agencies, and visitor use groups	Same as Alternative 2	NPS and gateway communities would enter into cooperative partnerships  NPS would expand participation in regional economic development efforts and cooperative efforts with the state parks, public agencies, and visitor use groups	Same as Alternative 4

and – through the park’s leasing program – would provide an income stream for their long-term maintenance. All action alternatives would result in major beneficial impacts on visitor use and visitor experience; Alternative 5 would address the majority of visitor use issues expressed by the public and, as a result, is the only action alternative that would not have associated adverse impacts on visitor use and visitor experience.

- All action alternatives would result in regional short-term and long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts on the economy; Alternative 5 would have the greatest direct and indirect economic impact in terms of jobs, earnings, NPS spending, and visitor spending.
- All action alternatives would result in minor to major beneficial impacts on communities within and near the park; in Alternatives 4 and 5 more aggressive partnering with gateway communities would better enhance relevance of the park to local visitors and better enable the NPS to respond to concerns of local residents about how the park is managed.
- All action alternatives would result in innovative partnerships that would generate new income streams to support park management; in Alternatives 4 and 5 more new sources of funding would become available to support park operations as a result of more aggressive partnering with gateway communities, regional economic development interests, other government agencies, user groups, and the park’s friends.
- All action alternatives would result in minor to moderate short-term adverse impacts associated with construction of new visitor use facilities and cultural resource management actions; management actions included in Alternative 5 would disturb the largest total area as a result of development of new facilities; mitigation measures and best management practices would be used to avoid or minimize potential impacts from implementation of future management actions in the action alternatives.

#### ■ **Summary of Public Involvement in Alternatives Development**

In July 2006 the NPS presented the Alternatives 1 through 4 to the public in a series of three public meetings. The alternatives were also posted on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website. Comments received revealed an overall concern regarding the extent to which each alternative would protect the natural resources of the park, protect the primitive character of the park, protect the park’s wildlife (particularly its birds), and provide additional trails (particularly single-track trails and backcountry trails offering a multi-day trip opportunity). Many people suggested that they would like to combine aspects of each alternative, suggesting an alternative that combines the emphasis on backcountry preservation and historic resources themes in Alternative 2, the through park trail in Alternative 3, and the emphasis on gateways and working with communities in Alternative 4.



In response to the public comment received the NPS developed Alternative 5 which combined the features in Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, suggested by the public following the July 2006 public meetings. In October 2007 the NPS circulated a newsletter summarizing Alternatives 1 to 5, including options for hunting and biking in the park and preliminary findings of the wilderness eligibility assessment. All parties on the park's mailing list received the newsletter. NPS also posted it on the NPS PEPC site. Following release of the newsletter the NPS hosted a series of three public meetings to present the alternatives and to receive public comment. Approximately 292 people attended.

Since the November 2008 public meetings the NPS has received approximately 700 written comments on the proposed alternatives. Most comments supported the continuation of hunting (Alternatives 1 or 3) or enhancement of hunting (Alternative 5) and opposed wilderness designation. Many comments supported the development of biking trails in frontcountry and backcountry zones (most represented in Alternative 5). The public in general supported Alternative 5 in preference to Alternatives 1 to 4.

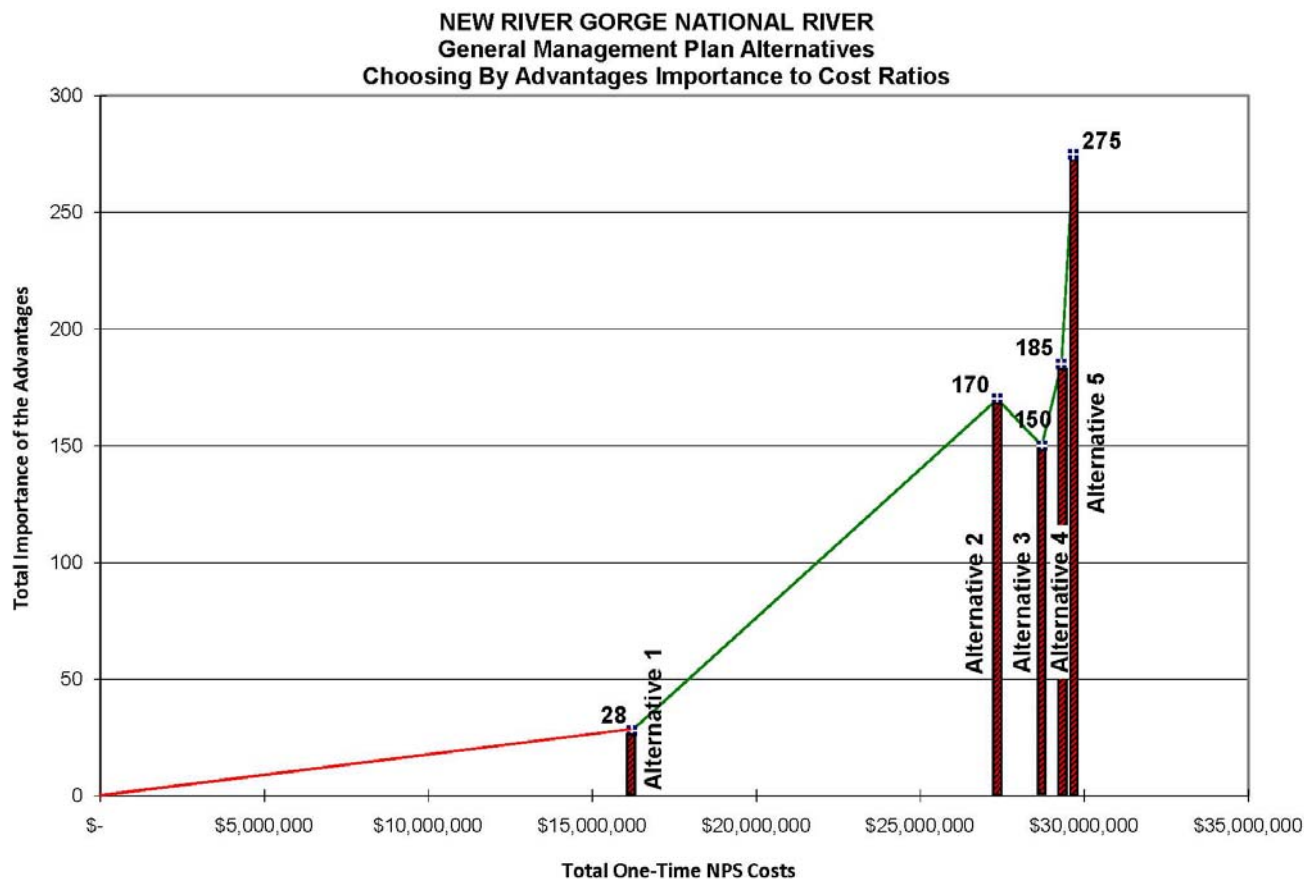
■ **Summary of Findings from the Choosing By Advantages Decision-Making Process**

The GMP planning team also used the "Choosing By Advantages" (CBA) process to organize and evaluate the facts most relevant to the selection of the preferred alternative and to minimize the influence of individual biases and opinions in the decision-making process. The CBA process, which has been used extensively by government agencies and the private sector, evaluates different alternatives by identifying and comparing the relative advantages of each alternative according to a set of criteria. CBA does not weight factors when making decisions. Rather it focuses on the different advantages associated with specific alternatives and determines how important those advantages are.

Findings of the CBA process determined that Alternative 5 would fulfill the statutory mission and responsibilities of the park and offer a greater overall advantage when compared to the other GMP alternatives considered. The advantages offered by Alternative 5 relative to Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 are summarized as follows:

- **Protection of the park's natural resources** – Alternative 5 provides the highest degree of protection of park's natural resources. Alternative 5 would be highly advantageous when compared to Alternatives 2 and 4 and very highly advantageous when compared to Alternative 3. Alternative 1 would offer no advantage.
- **Protection of the park's cultural resources** – Alternative 5 provides the highest degree of protection of the park's cultural resources. Alternative 5 would be highly advantageous when compared to Alternatives 2 and 3 and very highly advantageous when compared to Alternatives 1 and 4.

Figure 2.1



- **Provision of exceptional opportunities for visitors** – Alternative 5 provides the most exceptional opportunities for visitors. Alternative 5 would be highly advantageous when compared to Alternatives 3 and 4 and very highly advantageous when compared to Alternatives 1 and 2. Alternative 1 would offer no advantage.
- **Overall Value** – Alternative 5 offers the best overall value. It has the greatest increase in the **total importance of advantages** for not much more money when compared to Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 (evidenced in the above importance to cost graph by the steep upward slope of the line from Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 to Alternative 5).

## 2.2 Alternative 1 – Continuation of Current Management

### 2.2.1 Overall Management Concept (Alternative 1)

Alternative 1 is a continuation of current management and trends (see Figure 2.2). The park's enabling legislation and the existing *General Management Plan* (NPS 1982) would continue to guide park management. The NPS would manage park resources and visitor use as it does today, with no major change in direction. Improvements to visitor facilities and park operations facilities would include only projects that are already approved.

### 2.2.2 Management Zoning (Alternative 1)

The NPS no longer uses the zoning plan from the existing *General Management Plan* (NPS 1982) because it is not a useful representation of the allocation of park resources and values needed to achieve desired conditions and visitor experiences. Furthermore, the existing GMP assigns management zoning to approximately 11,000 of the 72,189 acres within the current park boundary, leaving 52,000 acres not zoned.

In Alternative 1 there would be no new management zoning. The NPS would continue to make management decisions as it does today on an ad hoc basis using best available management practices.

### 2.2.3 Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation (Alternative 1)

#### ■ Experiencing the Park

Visitors would have the classic park experiences as they currently exist at Sandstone Falls, the Sandstone Visitor Center, Grandview, Thurmond, Nuttallburg/Kaymoor, Endless Wall, the Canyon Rim Visitor Center, and Fayette Station Road (see Table 2.4). Other important experiences that visitors would have in the park would remain largely as they are today, focused on existing attractions and visitor facilities. Improvements associated with the future New River Parkway would greatly enhance access, visitor facilities, and the experiences visitors have in the south.

#### ■ Visitor Orientation

Visitor orientation would continue to focus on directing visitors to the "classic visitor experiences" at New River Gorge where they can learn about the park's history and resources. Orientation would also provide information regarding opportunities for recreation experiences in the park.













Primary venues for visitor orientation would be the visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Sandstone. From these locations visitors would go to sites of the park's classic experiences and to recreation sites. They would also receive maps describing the park's scenic drives and learn about interpretative programs. Smaller visitor

**Table 2.4 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 1)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have</b>	
<b>Appreciate life in the gorge – the human history story</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park there are cultural resource sites where human history stories could be told.</b></p> <p>The places where visitors learn about the park's history would be dispersed throughout the park at a few locations, such as Thurmond and Nuttallburg. Most stories would continue to be told through visitor center exhibits, ranger walks and talks, waysides along park roads and trails, and special programs.</p>
<b>Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape</b>	<p><b>A sense of wildness dominates the landscape setting in most areas of the park.</b></p> <p>While paddling the river visitors would be transported to remote and wild areas in the upper, middle, and lower gorge, relying on the existing network of river accesses which make possible a variety of paddling experiences in a wild landscape setting.</p> <p>Visitors venturing into the forest would explore the park making their way along the park's existing network of trails at times near the water's edge and at times looking into the gorge. Exploration of the park by bicycle would be limited to administrative roads.</p> <p>Visitors camping in the forest at existing campsites would experience nature and the sense of solitude that comes from spending extended time in the outdoors.</p> <p>From existing developed overlooks – at Brooks, Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Turkey Spur, Kaymoor, and Canyon Rim – expansive vistas of rugged terrain, dense forest, and the turbulent river in the gorge below would evoke appreciation of the wild landscape. A new developed overlook would be added in the River Road corridor as part of the New River Parkway project.</p>
<b>Experience the power of the river</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park the power of the river is evident wherever visitors can be on the river, be at the river's edge, or view the river from afar.</b></p> <p>The New River would carry paddlers along its freeflowing course through the gorge cut by its waters deep in the Appalachian Plateau. Those who ride the river as it descends through the gorge would feel its power and experience the thrill of adventure and discovery as the water flows turbulently over and amidst massive boulders transported through time from the cliff walls above. River experiences would be available from the existing network of river accesses for paddlers of all skill levels during most spring, summer, and fall months.</p> <p>At the river's edge visitors could see, smell, and hear the river, feeling its power as they sense around them the scale of the gorge shaped by the flowing water. From the existing network of river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge visitors would experience the river as it flows calmly yet powerfully on its course northward; elsewhere visitors would experience a wild river flowing turbulently around rocks and boulders. In the River Road corridor the river's edge experience would be enhanced by day-use area improvements included in the New River Parkway project.</p> <p>From existing developed overlooks – at Brooks, Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Turkey Spur, Kaymoor, and Canyon Rim – the depth of the gorge, the exposed cliff walls, and the massive boulders in the river below, would evidence the river's power to shape the landscape. A new developed overlook would be added in the River Road corridor as part of the New River Parkway project.</p>
<b>Experience scenic beauty</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park its scenic beauty is evident from roads, trails, overlooks, and the river.</b></p> <p>From existing roads visitors would have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. In the south end of the park, as visitors travel the future New River Parkway from Sandstone to Hinton the scenic quality of the park would be evident in the dramatic landscape visible from the New River Bridge and along the parkway. In the north end of the park, efforts would be made to enhance opportunities for scenic vistas along Fayette Station Road by working with WV DOH to add pull-outs.</p> <p>Visitors traveling on existing trails would continue to have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river.</p>



KEY

-  Visitor Center
-  Parking Facility
-  Operations Facility
-  Camping
-  River Access
-  Overlook
-  Picnicking
-  Camping
-  NPS land within National River Limits
-  State Park Land within National River Limits
-  Scenic Easement
-  Private Land within National River Limits

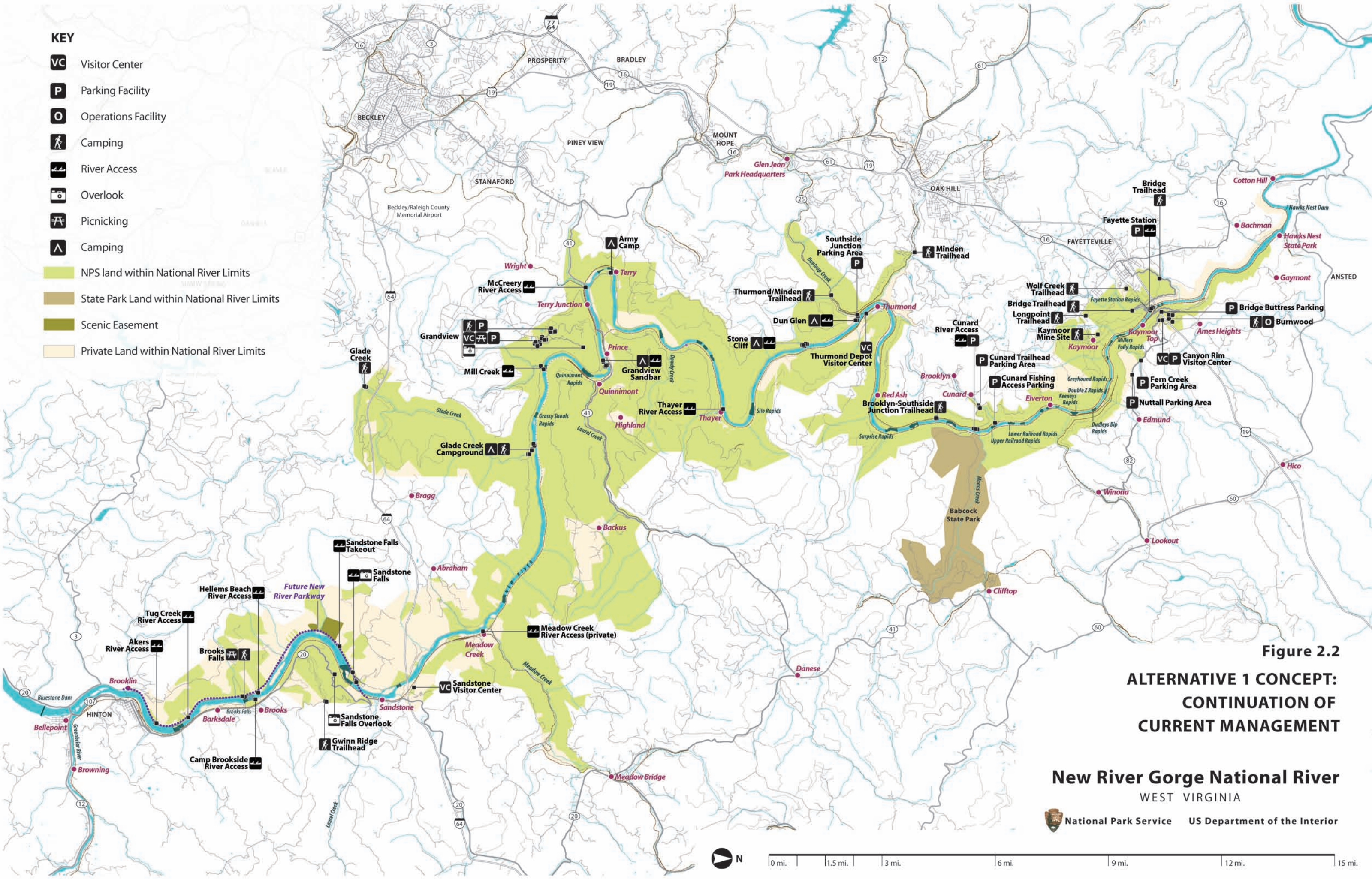


Figure 2.2  
ALTERNATIVE 1 CONCEPT:  
CONTINUATION OF  
CURRENT MANAGEMENT

New River Gorge National River  
WEST VIRGINIA

 National Park Service US Department of the Interior



**Table 2.4 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 1)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued)</b>	
<b>Experience scenic beauty (continued)</b>	<p>Visitors would continue to have panoramic scenic views of the park's landscape from existing developed overlooks at Brooks, Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Turkey Spur, Kaymoor, and Canyon Rim. A new developed overlook would be added in the River Road corridor as part of the New River Parkway project.</p> <p>Views of the scenic river corridor and gorge walls above would be experienced by visitors who paddle the river and by visitors to existing river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge.</p>
<b>Classic Park Experiences</b>	
<b>Paddling the New River</b>	Paddlers would continue to experience the power of the river and the park's wild character and natural beauty as they float the river, stopping to picnic, fish, visit natural and cultural sites of interest, and/or camp. Opportunities for paddlers of all skill levels would continue from the existing network of river accesses in the upper, middle, and lower gorge. Camping and picnicking facilities and river rest stops would remain as they are today.
<b>Sandstone Falls</b>	The boardwalk and recreational facilities at Sandstone would continue to bring visitors to the water's edge where they can feel the power of the river, experience its beauty, and learn about the park's significant natural resources.
<b>Sandstone Falls Visitor Center</b>	At the Sandstone Falls Visitor Center visitors would continue to be oriented to the park.
<b>Grandview</b>	Social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities at Grandview would continue in a setting where visitors can experience the scenic beauty of the park, the wildness of its landscape, and the power of the river. Park visitors would enjoy safer access to the Turkey Spur overlook. Theatre goers would continue to enjoy productions at an updated Cliffside Amphitheatre.
<b>Thurmond</b>	Life in a railroading town during the park's industrial era would continue to be exemplified at Thurmond. Visitors could walk or drive town roads, looking at remaining structures, and learning about life in the gorge. Visitors would be able to access historic buildings at Commercial Row once they are stabilized and contamination is remediated.
<b>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg</b>	Trails would provide visitor access to historic mining areas at Kaymoor and Nuttallburg. Nationally significant mining resources at Nuttallburg would be interpreted for visitors and made more accessible through parking and trail improvements.
<b>Experiencing the Cliffs</b>	The massive sandstone cliffs in the Endless Wall area and elsewhere would continue to attract visitors seeking to experience their beauty as well as the thrill of adventure, exploration, and solitude of rock climbing.
<b>Canyon Rim</b>	At Canyon Rim visitors would continue to be oriented to the park at the visitor center and to have opportunities to view the river and the gorge from existing overlooks.
<b>Fayette Station Road</b>	Fayette Station Road would continue to be a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where visitors would experience the historic travel route across the river, learn about the park's industrial heritage, view the river, and feel its power.

centers at Thurmond and Grandview – sites of two park classic experiences – would continue as secondary locations where visitors would be oriented to the park.

#### **2.2.4 Resource Management (Alternative 1)**

##### **■ Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems (Alternative 1)**

Existing natural resource management programs would continue consistent with applicable federal and state of West Virginia laws and regulations, National Park Service policies (see Appendix B), and adopted NPS plans for the park (see Section 1.11.1 above).

##### **■ Water Quality Management (Alternative 1)**

Water quality management actions in the park would continue. NPS would collect ambient water quality data for the New River and most of its tributaries. Sanitary facilities would be provided at most developed visitor facilities. River rest stops and other sites in remote areas of the park would have few or no sanitary facilities. NPS would provide technical assistance to WVDEP, the Plateau Action Network, Fayette County, Summers County, Raleigh County, local communities, public service districts, and other appropriate groups involved in water quality management in the New River watershed in the park vicinity.

At Thurmond, wastewater collection and treatment would be provided by the NPS for existing visitor facilities and currently occupied houses.

##### **■ Cultural Resource Management (Alternative 1)**

Existing cultural resource management programs would continue consistent with applicable federal and state of West Virginia laws and regulations, National Park Service policies (see Appendix B), and adopted NPS plans for the park (see Section 1.11.1 above). In Alternative 1 the NPS would also implement a number of cultural resource management actions.

**Early Settlement/Agricultural Resources.** Resources in the southern end of the park would generally be managed as follows:

- farmhouses would be stabilized
- outbuildings would be maintained in period condition
- farm fields, fence lines, and orchards would be maintained
- farm fields would be leased for agriculture
- as properties in the Richmond Bottom and Westfall Farm areas are acquired or otherwise protected, modern structures would be removed

**Prince Brothers General Store.** The Prince Brothers General Store exterior would be stabilized.

**Thurmond.** At Thurmond, the lead paint and asbestos contamination in the commercial row structures would be remediated.

**Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg Town Site.** At the former site of the Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg Town Site, emergency cultural resource management actions and actions identified in the *Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area Implementation Plan* (NPS 2008b) would be implemented. Collectively these actions would stabilize nationally significant cultural resources on the site and provide a focal area within the park for the interpretation of early coal mining technology in the New River Coal Field. They would also provide park visitors with a safe experience that offers opportunities for education and recreation.

**Park Museum Collection.** The park's collection would be relocated from the Glen Jean Bank in the Park Headquarters Complex. In accordance with the NPS Northeast Region's collection management strategy, infrequently used items in the collection would be moved to the multi-park shared facility at Appomattox Courthouse. NPS would construct a new research room for on-site storage of the park's core unexhibited collections.

#### ■ **Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge (Alternative 1)**

Viewshed studies indicate extensive areas in the park vicinity where new development – if it should occur in the future – would be visible from the park and would potentially impact the park setting, the visitor experience, and important resource areas (see Appendix F). Addition of these areas to the park is impracticable because of potential community impacts and cost. In lieu of boundary adjustments and land acquisition the NPS would seek to protect scenic resources from impacts of new development on these lands by working cooperatively with communities and private landowners. Actions would generally include the following:

- Coordination with owners of land possessing outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge
  - collaborate to seek modifications to land development proposals to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to outstanding scenic values
- Coordination with local governments
  - provide comments on potential adverse impacts of proposed development on outstanding scenic values
  - seek to involve NPS early on in the development review process when lands with outstanding scenic values are proposed for development



### 2.2.5 Visitor Use and Visitor Facilities (Alternative 1)

#### ■ Hiking and Equestrian Use (Alternative 1)

In Alternative 1 there would be no major expansion of the park's hiking or equestrian trail system. Minor hiking trail additions would occur at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area, including trails 1) following historic traces at the Nuttallburg town site, 2) in the vicinity of the stabilized headhouse, conveyor, and tipple, 3) along the coke oven bank, and 4) providing climbing access at the base of the Nuttallburg sandstone headwall. Trailheads with parking facilities would be provided at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area at the upper, middle, switchback, and lower levels for access to the existing Nuttall Mine and Nuttallburg Tipple Trails.

#### ■ Biking (Alternative 1)

In Alternative 1 biking would continue to be permitted on portions of nine trails are open to bicycles, providing access to a variety of places such as overlooks, the New River, and historic sites in the lower gorge (see Table 3.36). No other biking trails would be designated.

#### ■ Hunting (Alternative 1) (Continuation of Existing Hunting Program)

In Alternative 1 hunting within the park would continue in accordance with the hunting and fishing regulations of the WV DNR. Hunting would generally be permitted throughout the park. A few areas would continue to be closed to hunting for safety reasons, including:

- areas designated as safety zones in the park compendium (NPS 2007)
- areas within the historic boundaries of Grandview State Park and Sandstone Falls State Park
- the area within the boundary of Babcock State Park (which is managed by the state of West Virginia)

WV DNR hunting regulations and general safety provisions can be found on the internet at [www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov). Some of the safety measures include the prohibition of shooting within 500 feet of dwellings and shooting across roads. The NPS-designated safety zones establish no-hunting perimeters around public gathering sites such as visitor centers, parking lots, trail heads, and campgrounds. Safety zones at New River Gorge National River are listed and mapped in the compendium. The compendium is available at the following internet site (<http://www.nps.gov/neri/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm>).

#### ■ Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way (Alternative 1)

The NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire wherever possible additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park. Priorities would be to secure legal crossings where visitors frequently illegally cross tracks at Hinton, Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, Todd Beach, Southside Junction,

Piney Creek, Dowdy Creek, Nuttallburg, Keeney Creek, Kaymoor, Short Creek, the Lower Railroad area, and Fayette Station.

■ **Access and Parking (Alternative 1)**

Access and parking improvements would occur in three locations in Alternative 1:

- West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways would develop the New River Parkway from I-64 to Hinton, with a bridge over the New River; parking facilities would be provided at new visitor use facilities to be developed in conjunction with the parkway (see Other Visitor Use Facilities below).
- NPS would develop four trailhead parking areas that would provide visitor access to the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area
- NPS would make improvements to Turkey Spur Road at Grandview

In addition the NPS would work cooperatively with the WV DOH to:

- facilitate improvements to WV SR 82 (widening and addition of pull-outs and actions to allow two-way traffic)
- provide parking at Thurmond in conjunction with replacement of the Thurmond Bridge

■ **Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access) (Alternative 1)**

In Alternative 1 the recreation sites currently used by visitors for picnicking, swimming, camping, and fishing would continue to be used in their current condition. Most sites would remain largely undeveloped with visitors either parking informally along the road and walking into the site or floating by on a boat. Most sites would have no toilets, trash receptacles, or site designations. Use would remain unrestricted with respect to group size and made available first-come, first-served.

Additional visitor facilities associated with Alternative 1 would include those associated with implementation of funded plans for New River Parkway, the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area, and the Burnwood Center:

- as part of the New River Parkway project, the WV DOH would develop 1) boat and river access facilities at Mermaid Beach, 2) parking at Longbottom Overlook, 3) parking, picnicking facilities, and interpretive media at Fall Branch Access, and 4) visitor access and parking facilities at Richmond-Hamilton Farm, Vallandingham Farm, and Cochran Farm
- once the New River Parkway project is complete, the NPS would develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton, and enabling visitors to enjoy more scenery and visit historic communities in the southern end of the park

- as part of the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area project, the NPS would develop trails, visitor access and parking facilities, and comfort stations.
- as part of the Burnwood Center Project the NPS would 1) relocate and rehabilitate existing picnic shelters, and 2) construct a new environmental education center (other actions at Burnwood would support park operations, including construction of a new park operations building, parking, and new utilities)

NPS would continue to make accessibility improvements at existing and new facilities with the goal of making all visitor facilities at developed visitor use areas accessible to visitors and employees with disabilities. Where practicable given river conditions, NPS would also seek to provide river access for disabled boaters that

would enable them to experience safe river trips of different lengths and levels of difficulty.

#### **2.2.6 Working with Local Communities (Alternative 1)**

##### **■ Sustaining Communities within the Park (Alternative 1)**

**Hinton.** The NPS would continue to provide technical assistance to the city of Hinton with rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Hinton Depot and would continue to work cooperatively with the city to accomplish mutual goals regarding management and use of the New River waterfront area.

**Thurmond.** The small enclave of occupied private residences at Thurmond would remain as “a community within a park attraction”. The level of visitor use at Thurmond would remain low and generally confined to the visitor center at the Thurmond Depot, the Commercial Row area, and the lower areas of the town where the NPS owns most of the property and houses. The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with residents to address issues associated with living in the historic town. The NPS would also develop a community water system and wastewater management system at Thurmond for NPS use; water and wastewater service would be extended to private residences in the town on a fee basis.

**Other Communities within the Park.** In general, as funding permits the NPS would continue to acquire property within communities in the park as they become available from willing sellers. The NPS would not take actions specifically designed to sustain the continued presence of communities that still remain in the park in the vicinity of Meadow Creek, Backus, Prince/Quinnimont, Highland, Terry, and Thayer.

#### **2.2.7 Land Protection (Alternative 1)**

##### **■ Land Protection Priorities (Alternative 1)**

As funding permits, land protection would continue until most land remaining within the current park boundary is protected through voluntary sale of property to the

NPS or through voluntary conveyance of conservation easements to the NPS or to a qualified non-profit land trust. The NPS land protection staff would continue to respond to all opportunities for negotiation with willing sellers as they arise, subject to staff capacity and availability of acquisition funds.

- **Stewardship of Private Land Remaining within the Park Boundary (Alternative 1)**

Existing means of communication with remaining private landowners within the park would continue. The NPS would respond to landowner needs and concerns on an individual basis as they arise, seeking to address issues and provide technical assistance where practicable. New measures to enhance stewardship of private lands in the park would not be implemented.

## **2.2.8 Partnerships (Alternative 1)**

- **Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors (Alternative 1)**

Actions currently implemented by the park to enhance local appreciation and understanding of the park would continue. These would include the standard set of NPS practices intended to strengthen the connection between the American public and the mission of the NPS. Generally these would include signage and informational materials with a recognized NPS graphic identity, presence of uniformed rangers throughout the park, contextual design of visitor facilities, and interpretive and educational programs for schools and visitors. The NPS “volunteers in the park” (VIP) and recently created Friends of New River Gorge group would continue to offer local residents opportunities to better understand the park mission and significance.

- **Gateway Community Partnerships (Alternative 1)**

The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with local governments in Summers, Raleigh, and Fayette Counties, as well as the nearby communities that are the park’s gateways – Hinton, Sandstone, Meadow Bridge, Beckley, Mount Hope, Glen Jean, Oak Hill, Minden, Cunard, Fayetteville, Winona, and Ansted. These relationships would remain informal, involving provision of relatively narrowly defined technical assistance with land use planning and geographic database (GIS) management, planning and design of trail connections, treatment of cultural resources, and assistance with hosting special events.

- **Regional Tourism Partnerships (Alternative 1)**

The NPS would continue to work cooperatively on many initiatives with local chambers of commerce, convention bureaus, visitors’ bureaus, economic development interests, the Coal Heritage Area, and the Tamarack Foundation. These initiatives would focus on improving awareness of the park as a unit of the national park system, attracting visitors to the region, providing information to visitors, improving wayfinding from local communities to the park, developing visitor



support services in gateway communities, and promoting public understanding of the positive impacts of the park on the quality of life in local communities.

#### ■ Other Partnerships (Alternative 1)

The NPS would continue to collaborate with Hawks Nest State Park to protect scenic resources in and around the gorge and to make information available to visitors about each park. Babcock State Park would continue to operate independent of collaboration with the NPS.

The NPS would continue to collaborate with state and federal agencies to address specific resource management needs at the park related to treatment of cultural resources, water quality monitoring, hunting, rare and endangered species protection, fishing access, maintenance of flows in the New River, maintenance of public roads in the park, and management of whitewater use of the river.

The NPS would continue to seek input from visitor user groups with identifying visitor use issues and identification of potential solutions for consideration.

#### 2.2.9 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Alternative 1)

Table 2.5 identifies the desired resource conditions and desired visitor experiences for specific areas of the park in Alternative 1. The area-specific desired conditions focus on fundamental and other important resources and values and the visitor experience opportunities associated with them that would be appropriate in particular locations.

Table 2.5 also identifies the general types of actions in specific areas of the park that would be needed and allowable to achieve desired conditions in Alternative 1. These are examples of the actions needed to move from existing conditions to desired conditions. Identifying the types of needed and allowable changes helps 1) to provide a sense of what management actions might occur and what development might look like, 2) to identify the impacts of these actions, and 3) to estimate the general costs of implementing the actions.

#### 2.2.10 Costs (Alternative 1)

The NPS has prepared estimates of annual operating costs and one-time costs associated with Alternative 1 using NPS and industry cost estimating guidelines (see Table 2.37 in Section 2.14 below). Annual recurring costs include personnel and non-labor costs, such as utilities, vehicles, travel, and supplies. One-time capital investments include construction, exhibits, research and planning. These costs are presented for comparative purposes only and will be refined at a later date based upon final design of facilities and other considerations. Some projects have the potential to be funded through partnerships and volunteers, or through shared funding with other agencies. Therefore, actual costs would vary depending on when specific actions are implemented and on contributions by partners and volunteers.

### ■ NPS Annual Operating Costs and Staffing Requirements (Alternative 1)

NPS annual operating costs associated with Alternative 1 are estimated to be \$13,350,000 (2009 dollars). This includes the anticipated cost for staff salaries and benefits for 160 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, utilities, supplies, leasing (including leased park offices, as in Alternative 1), and other materials needed for park maintenance and operations.

GAO, in its report *Major Operational Funding Trends and How Selected Park Units Responded to those Trends for Fiscal Years 2001 through 2005* noted that " . . . each unit experienced an increase in daily operations allocations, but most experienced a decline in inflation-adjusted terms. " Congress later confirmed the GAO findings, noting in the House Report for Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriations Bill for the NPS that "Unfortunately, because of inadequate budget requests, the parks have had to absorb \$61,000,000 over the last six years in mandatory pay costs. This figure is exclusive of other costs impacts cited by GAO including unfunded retirement and health benefit increases, and mandates for homeland security and information technology security."

New River Gorge National River has experienced these trends just as other parks have, and therefore the park has not been able to replace staff vacancies that have arisen over the past several years. In addition, inflation on fixed costs items, such as utilities, supplies and materials have also meant that permanent and seasonal staff has been reduced. Of the 160 FTE in the park's approved organizational chart, only 118 FTE are currently filled. For the purposes of this cost estimate, 160 FTE members have been assumed. Filling vacant positions would allow the park to maintain the trails, campgrounds, visitor centers, grounds and complete other necessary science, resource management and stewardship work.

### ■ NPS One-Time Costs (Alternative 1)

NPS one-time costs associated with Alternative 1 are estimated to be \$16,200,000 (2009 dollars) including one-time facilities costs and non-facilities costs.

Facility costs include projects such as the following:

- Thurmond community wastewater system
- Thurmond Commercial Row hazardous material abatement and fire protection
- Nuttallburg long-term stabilization of coal mine structures
- Nuttallburg visitor use facilities
- museum collections storage building

Non-facility costs include negotiation and construction of railroad crossings where park visitors need to cross the CSX mainline to access trails, river access and other facilities.

**Table 2.5 Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes**

Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Development Areas</b>			
<b>Glen Jean (Park Headquarters)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>park headquarters, headquarters annex (Glen Jean Bank), and operations facilities</li> <li>Glen Jean Bank (listed on National Register) (good condition)</li> <li>all structures located within 25-year floodplain</li> <li>park collection facility in Glen Jean Bank (within the floodplain)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the park's museum collections are properly housed and curated, made available for research, and appropriately tell the park's story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>move the park's core unexhibited collections to a research room at the new park operations center to be developed at Burnwood</li> <li>move infrequently used museum collections to the multi-park shared facility at Appomattox Courthouse with adjustments regarding which objects based upon an evaluation of condition, size, and/or site significance</li> </ul>
<b>Fayette Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (parking, picnicking, public restrooms)</li> <li>CSX Main Line (active)</li> <li>visitors (primarily private paddlers) frequently illegally cross the CSX Main Line to reach the river access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe pedestrian access to existing visitor parking</li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to facilitate improvements to WV SR 82 (widening and addition of pull-outs – actions to allow two-way traffic)</li> </ul>
<b>Burnwood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental education based at picnic pavilions (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>Laing Loop Nature Trail</li> <li>park operations facilities (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facility (serving Burnwood and the Canyon Rim Visitor Center) (excess capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>management facilities support efficient park operations</li> <li>park staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, and partners work in a safe and secure environment</li> <li>the park's museum collections are properly housed and curated, made available for research, and appropriately tell the park's story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement the Burnwood Center Development Concept Plan, generally including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- relocation and rehabilitation of existing picnic shelters</li> <li>- removal of other structures</li> <li>- construction of a new park operations center, a new environmental education building, and new utilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>at the New Burnwood park operations center, develop a research room for the park's core unexhibited collections that meets NPS standards and consolidates curatorial functions with other administrative operations</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource Areas</b>			
<b>Hinton Depot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hinton Station (owned by the city of Hinton) (active AMTRAK station)</li> <li>CSX Main Line (active) and rail yard</li> <li>former round house site</li> <li>abandoned coal tippie</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS and its gateway community neighbors work collaboratively to define and accomplish shared goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide technical assistance to the city of Hinton with rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Hinton Depot</li> <li>work cooperatively with the city of Hinton to accomplish mutual goals regarding management and use of the New River waterfront area</li> <li>develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Richmond Bottom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richmond-Hamilton Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- farmhouse (habitable condition), split-log barns (period condition), other outbuildings (period condition)</li> <li>- fields not leased for agriculture</li> <li>- no park facilities</li> <li>- no interpretive programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Vallandigham Farm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- log cabin (not habitable), log smokehouse, other outbuildings</li> <li>- vegetation impacting site</li> <li>- no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Richmond-Hamilton Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work cooperatively with WV DOH to make improvements as part of the New River Parkway project, including visitor access and parking facilities</li> <li>- stabilize farmhouse exterior</li> <li>- lease farm fields for agriculture</li> <li>- maintain outbuildings in period condition</li> </ul> </li> <li>at Vallandigham Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stabilize farmhouse exterior</li> <li>- lease farm fields for agriculture</li> <li>- maintain outbuildings in period condition</li> </ul> </li> <li>as other properties at Richmond Bottom are acquired or otherwise protected, remove modern structures and maintain farm fields and plantings</li> <li>develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton</li> </ul>

**Table 2.5 Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes**

Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Trump-Lilly Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farm, outbuildings, farm fields, and orchard</li> <li>excellent example of post-bellum subsistence farmstead in uplands of the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register</li> <li>farmhouse not habitable</li> <li>approximately 10 percent of historic fields are presently open</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and the cultural landscape are preserved or protected</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of the cultural landscapes are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stabilize farmhouse and outbuildings exterior</li> <li>lease farm fields for agriculture</li> <li>maintain outbuildings in period condition</li> </ul>
<b>Westfall Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>privately-owned; recently subdivided and some new homes constructed</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>Cochran Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outbuildings, cemetery, small pond (filling in)</li> <li>most of site is an open field with</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Cochran Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain outbuildings in period condition</li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to make improvements as part of the New River Parkway project, including visitor access and parking facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>as properties within the historic extent of the farm are acquired or otherwise protected, remove modern structures and maintain farm fields and plantings</li> </ul>
<b>Phillips Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>log cabin and log outbuilding (fairly intact)</li> <li>timber-frame outbuilding (badly deteriorated)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of the cultural landscape are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lease farm fields for agriculture</li> </ul>
<b>Harrah Homestead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame house, wood-frame outbuildings, log smokehouse (all in very poor condition)</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings are preserved or protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stabilize remaining homestead buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Carper Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>barn</li> <li>agricultural fields (leased)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of the cultural landscape are preserved or protected</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of the cultural landscape are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain the remaining farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>as properties within the historic extent of the farm are acquired or otherwise protected, remove modern structures and restore farm fields and plantings</li> <li>lease farm fields for agriculture</li> </ul>
<b>Prince Brothers General Store</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame store (recently stabilized on exterior)</li> <li>last surviving commercial building of its type along the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register (for its architectural design)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and the cultural landscape are preserved or protected</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stabilize the exterior of Prince Brothers General Store</li> </ul>
<b>Thurmond</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>town mostly owned by the NPS, although some houses remain in private ownership and are occupied year-round</li> <li>entire town site included within the Thurmond Historic District (listed on National Register)</li> <li>restored Thurmond Depot (used as NPS visitor center) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>Commercial Row (stabilized on exterior) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>remnants of C&amp;O train yard and passenger depot</li> <li>various frame houses (variable condition – some in poor condition, some recently stabilized on exterior only)</li> <li>vegetation (kudzu) negatively impacted site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience in the park</li> <li>park staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, and partners work in a safe and secure environment</li> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and the cultural landscape are preserved or protected</li> <li>views of the cultural landscape are protected</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>communities in the park are sustained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remediate lead paint and asbestos contamination in commercial row structures</li> <li>maintain commercial row structures in a stabilized condition</li> <li>provide safe drinking water and wastewater disposal via a community water system (deep wells) and a community wastewater management system (50,000 gallons per day advanced sewage treatment system)</li> </ul>



**Table 2.5 Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes**

Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Thurmond (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>structures at Commercial row have lead and asbestos contamination</li> <li>inadequate water supply and wastewater treatment systems</li> </ul>		
<b>Nuttallburg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>former site of Nuttallburg Mining Complex and town of Nuttallburg</li> <li>site included within the Nuttallburg Coal Mining Complex and Town Historic District (listed on the National Register)</li> <li>major mine buildings are extant; ongoing NPS stabilization project</li> <li>no other building remain, although stone foundations of town buildings and a bank of coke ovens remain intact; impacted by erosion and mudslides</li> <li>road traces and historic railroad grades remain</li> <li>vegetation (kudzu) negatively impacted site</li> <li>rare species present in the vicinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and the cultural landscape are preserved or protected</li> <li>views of the cultural landscape are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience in the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>native plant diversity is maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area Implementation Plan, generally including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long-term stabilization of the headhouse, conveyor, and tipple</li> <li>treatments to stabilize other building foundations and ruins</li> <li>rehabilitation of major town road traces</li> <li>trail construction and maintenance</li> <li>construction of visitor access and parking facilities</li> <li>development of interpretive media</li> <li>long-term invasive plant control</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor Areas</b>			
<b>Hinton to Meadow Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New River fishing (high use)</li> <li>Akers river access and day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>Tug Creek river access (low use)</li> <li>Brooks Falls river access, day-use facilities, undesignated camping (in floodplain) (poor condition) (high use)</li> <li>Hellems Beach river access, day-use facilities, and campground (campsites in floodplain – use over capacity during peak visitation periods) (high use)</li> <li>Sandstone Falls river take-out (moderate use)</li> <li>Meadow Creek private river access (low use)</li> <li>future WV DOH-funded reconstruction of River Road as New River Parkway, including a bridge across the New River and recreation site enhancements</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> <li>NPS and its gateway community neighbors work collaboratively to define and accomplish shared goals</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to make improvements as part of the New River Parkway project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Mermaid Beach, provide a hardened boat ramp, parking for vehicles with trailers, and picnicking facilities</li> <li>at Longbottom Overlook, provide parking</li> </ul> </li> <li>work cooperatively with the City of Hinton and the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way</li> </ul>
<b>Stone Cliff to Arbuckle Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stone Cliff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>campground and day-use area (in floodplain) (high use)</li> <li>Stone Cliff Trail and trailhead (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way at Southside Junction</li> </ul>
<b>Brooklyn to Hawks Nest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undesignated camping (moderate use)</li> <li>river fishing (no day-use facilities) (moderate use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Teays Landing river access (private)</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right upstream of Cunard and on river right and river left downstream of Cunard (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross CSX Main Line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to reach the lower railroad area (for fishing and boating)</li> <li>to reach Short Creek (for camping and fishing)</li> <li>to reach Kaymoor via the tunnel under the tracks (for hiking)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way in the lower railroad area, at Short Creek, and at Kaymoor</li> </ul>

**Table 2.5      Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes**

Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Forest Areas</b>			
<b>Sewell Mountain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Fall Branch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to make improvements as part of the New River Parkway project, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Fall Branch Access, provide parking, picnicking facilities, and interpretive media</li> </ul> </li> <li>develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Chestnut Mountain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandstone Overlook – parking demand exceeds capacity</li> <li>Gwinn Ridge Trail provides access for hiking</li> <li>Gwinn Ridge Trailhead – parking demand exceeds capacity</li> <li>Lick Creek - water quality impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide roadside interpretation from I-64 to Hinton</li> <li>develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Mountain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a loop driving tour following the parkway and the existing WV SR 20, linking Sandstone and Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Glade Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>popular hunting and fishing area (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR and Glade-Pinch Trout Association</li> <li>fish stocking in Mill Creek by WV DNR</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail provides fishing access and a connection from the rim to the river (admin vehicles permitted on upper section)</li> <li>Polls Plateau Trail, Kates Plateau Trail and Kates Falls Trail provide access for primitive camping and hunting</li> <li>Lower Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>Upper Glade Creek Trailhead (demand exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Cloverdale Road area used for access to Kates Plateau Trail although no trailhead facilities are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and the cultural landscape are preserved or protected</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of the cultural landscape are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Bennett Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain the remaining farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>lease farm fields for agriculture</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Beauty Mountain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beauty Mountain climbing area</li> <li>Beauty Mountain overlook (no designated trail)</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area Implementation Plan, generally including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trail construction and maintenance</li> <li>construction of trailhead facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 2.3 Management Zones Used to Develop Alternatives

The NPS uses management zones to describe the resource conditions and desired visitor experiences to be achieved in various areas of a park. The management zones identify the widest range of potential appropriate resource conditions, visitor experience, and facilities for access within the park that are consistent with its purpose, significance, and special mandates.

The NPS has identified five management zones for New River Gorge National River that were used in developing the action alternatives in this GMP/EIS (see Table 2.6):

- Backcountry Zone
- Frontcountry Zone
- River Corridor Zone
- Historic Resource Zone
- Park Development Zone

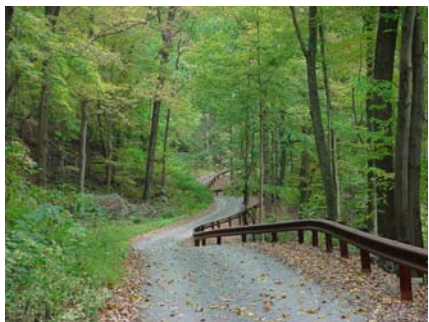
The four action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5) each use this set of management zones. There are six important observations about how the zones are applied in the alternatives:

- all activities and facilities appropriate in a management zone may not be allowed or constructed everywhere a management zone occurs
- areas assigned to backcountry and frontcountry zones vary for each alternative
- areas assigned to park development zones, historic resource zones, and river corridor zones are the same for each alternative
- while some zones in the action alternatives are the same in terms of their location, what may actually happen in each zone would vary from alternative to alternative, reflecting the underlying primary ideas of each alternative concept
- communities that remain in the park are not zoned

Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management) has no management zones because the park's current GMP (NPS 1982) identifies zones for only approximately 11,000 of the 72,189 acres currently within the park boundary.



▲ Backcountry Zone near Sewell



▲ Frontcountry Zone near Nuttallburg



▲ River Corridor Zone below Cunard



▲ Historic Resource Zone at Richmond-Hamilton Farm



▲ Park Development Zone at Canyon Rim

**Table 2.6 Management Zone Summary**

Zone	Overall Zone Concept	Geologic Features	Waters of the New River System
<b>Backcountry</b>	The <b>Backcountry Zone</b> includes the park's large contiguous tracts of intact forest. The park's backcountry forest would be maintained with negligible site-specific forest fragmentation. Management actions would ensure that native plant species would continue to dominate the forest community and that there would be negligible effects on natural processes. Remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites would be protected; historic resources might be stabilized throughout the zone and interpreted where public access can be provided. Low impact recreation would occur in locations and at levels that have negligible to minor impacts on forest values. Visitor use would generally be low. In climbing areas, low impact managed climbing opportunities might occur, natural processes might be minimally modified, and visitor use is commensurate with resource protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>natural geologic processes/features persist largely unaltered by human-induced impacts</li> <li>areas disturbed by mining are reclaimed and in some areas restored</li> <li>natural drainage patterns are restored in reclaimed areas</li> <li>high walls associated with mining are allowed to recover naturally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rainfall-runoff dynamics and sediment delivery occur at natural levels</li> <li>physical, chemical, and biological properties and dynamics of water reflect natural conditions</li> </ul>
<b>Frontcountry</b>	The <b>Frontcountry Zone</b> includes the park's large contiguous tracts of intact to somewhat fragmented forest. The park's frontcountry forest would be maintained with minor site-specific forest fragmentation. Management actions would ensure that native plant species would continue to dominate the forest community. Minimal modification of natural processes could occur. As in the Backcountry Forest Zone, remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites would be protected; historic resources might be stabilized and interpreted where public access can be provided. Moderate impact recreation would occur in locations and at levels that have negligible to minor impacts on forest values. Visitor use would be generally moderate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>natural geologic processes/features persist with minimal human-induced impacts (to provide roads and facilities for visitor use)</li> <li>areas disturbed by mining are reclaimed and in some areas restored</li> <li>natural drainage patterns are restored in reclaimed areas</li> <li>high walls associated with mining are allowed to recover naturally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rainfall-runoff dynamics and sediment delivery might be somewhat altered from natural levels</li> <li>physical, chemical, and biological properties and dynamics of water reflect natural conditions</li> <li>natural gradation of riparian plants occurs from water's edge to upland forest</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor</b>	The <b>River Corridor Zone</b> includes the free-flowing New River and adjoining riparian areas where natural processes support a high integrity sustainable aquatic and riparian ecosystem. Future management would continue to improve water quality in the New River so that it meets state standards for primary contact recreation and is no longer listed by the state as impaired. Remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites would be protected; historic resources might be stabilized and interpreted where public access can be provided. Low impact recreation would occur in locations and at levels that do not negatively impact river and riparian values. Visitor use would vary from low to high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>natural geologic processes/features persist with minimal human-induced impacts</li> <li>natural drainage patterns are restored in reclaimed areas</li> <li>acid mine drainage (AMD) is eliminated and AMD impacts are mitigated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the New River is free-flowing within the park</li> <li>rainfall-runoff dynamics and sediment delivery occur at natural levels</li> <li>the mosaic of hydrologic features reflects a natural stream ecosystem</li> <li>physical, chemical, and biological properties and dynamics of water reflect natural conditions</li> <li>hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of naturally occurring aquatic organisms</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource</b>	The <b>Historic Resource Zone</b> includes the park's most important historic buildings, structures, and landscapes. Management actions would preserve these resources while making them readily visible and accessible to visitors. Cultural landscapes and historic structures would be managed to retain and in some cases restore features that contribute to the public's understanding of the full range of activities that were important to the site. Where appropriate, the NPS might rehabilitate buildings so that they can be adaptively reused for purposes that are consistent with their history and in conformance with preservation standards. Special research efforts might be initiated to understand the fundamental values of these sites and their communities. Moderate impact recreation would occur in locations and at levels that do not negatively impact cultural resource values. Visitor use would generally be moderate to high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>natural geologic processes/features persist with minimal human-induced impacts (to provide roads and facilities for visitor use)</li> <li>all significant natural and human-induced disturbed areas are stabilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rainfall-runoff dynamics and sediment delivery might be somewhat altered from natural levels</li> <li>finished conditions maintain predevelopment runoff and water quality conditions</li> <li>physical, chemical, and biological properties and dynamics of water reflect natural conditions</li> <li>undisturbed natural buffers protect riparian habitat where compatible with cultural landscape preservation</li> </ul>
<b>Park Development</b>	The <b>Park Development Zone</b> includes the locations in the park where the most intense and diverse visitor use occurs. These areas are convenient and accessible. Visitor facilities might include visitor centers, river access facilities, campgrounds, picnic facilities, restrooms, roads, parking, and others. This zone also includes locations where park operations are based, including facilities such as park maintenance facilities and administrative offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>natural geologic processes/features persist with minimal human-induced impacts (to provide roads and facilities for visitor use)</li> <li>all disturbed areas are stabilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finished conditions maintain predevelopment runoff and water quality conditions</li> <li>physical, chemical, and biological properties and dynamics of water reflect natural conditions</li> <li>undisturbed natural buffers protect riparian habitat where compatible with park development goals</li> </ul>

Table 2.6 Management Zone Summary (continued)

Zone	Forest	Cultural Resources	Views	Resources that Offer Exceptional Visitor Opportunities
<b>Backcountry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>human-induced forest fragmentation and impacts to vertical understory structure and diversity are reduced or eliminated</li> <li>habitat mosaic supports a diversity and abundance of rare and native plant communities</li> <li>native plant diversity is increased</li> <li>prescribed fire occurs in fire-dependent ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites are protected</li> <li>historic resources might be stabilized and interpreted where public access is possible</li> <li>when remaining elements of historic resources are stabilized, vegetation removal/development mimics natural processes and canopy gaps to limit fragmentation whenever possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of views are protected that allow visitors to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience the extent of the gorge, river, forest, and rim</li> <li>understand the historic extent and appearance of cultural landscapes</li> </ul> </li> <li>very limited management of vegetation maintains views</li> <li>daytime skies are predominantly free of human-induced adverse impacts</li> <li>nighttime skies are predominantly dark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unfragmented forest blocks largely free of human disturbance exist over a broad area</li> <li>unfragmented forest blocks support diverse and abundant wildlife, particularly forest interior dwelling birds</li> <li>cliff faces and rock walls persist largely unaltered by human-induced impacts</li> <li>the natural quiet remains substantially free of human intrusions</li> </ul>
<b>Frontcountry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>human-induced forest fragmentation and impacts to vertical understory structure and diversity are reduced</li> <li>native plant diversity is increased</li> <li>prescribed fire occurs in fire-dependent ecosystems</li> <li>limited development for visitor use facilities might cause some forest fragmentation; facility design promotes forest continuity to limit potential for impacts to forest interior species</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites are protected</li> <li>historic resources might be stabilized and interpreted where public access is possible</li> <li>when remaining elements of historic resources are stabilized, vegetation removal/development mimics natural processes and canopy gaps to limit fragmentation whenever possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of views are protected that allow visitors to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience the extent of the gorge, river, forest, and rim</li> <li>understand the historic extent and appearance of cultural landscapes</li> </ul> </li> <li>selective management of vegetation maintains views</li> <li>daytime skies are predominantly free of human-induced adverse impacts</li> <li>nighttime skies are predominantly dark, although artificial light might occur for visitor safety at some sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>large contiguous forest blocks with some human disturbance exist over a broad area</li> <li>forest blocks support diverse and abundant wildlife</li> <li>cliff faces and rock walls persist largely unaltered by human-induced impacts</li> <li>the natural quiet remains substantially free of human intrusions</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river and small stream banks</li> <li>bars in the river are protected</li> <li>cobble and flatrock communities persist</li> <li>prescribed fire occurs in fire-dependent ecosystems</li> <li>limited development for visitor use facilities might cause some forest fragmentation; facility design limits potential for impacts to riparian species</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites are protected</li> <li>historic resources might be stabilized and interpreted where public access is possible</li> <li>some natural features might incur minor modification in order to enable protection and/or stabilization of cultural resources, but modifications do not degrade aquatic or riparian resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of views are protected that allow visitors to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience the extent of the gorge, river, forest, rim</li> <li>understand the historic extent and appearance of cultural landscapes</li> </ul> </li> <li>limited management of vegetation maintains views</li> <li>daytime skies are predominantly free of human-induced adverse impacts</li> <li>nighttime skies are predominantly dark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the New River is free-flowing within the park</li> <li>hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms experiencing natural ecological interactions</li> <li>the natural quiet remains substantially free of human intrusions</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-historic human-induced forest fragmentation and impacts to vertical understory structure and diversity are reduced or eliminated</li> <li>rare plant communities are maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, or sites are made readily visible</li> <li>buildings might be adaptively reused for purposes that are consistent with their history</li> <li>landscapes and structures are managed to retain and introduce features that contribute to the public's understanding of the activities that were important to the site</li> <li>special research efforts might occur to understand the fundamental value of sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of views are protected that allow visitors to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience the extent of the gorge, river, forest, and rim</li> <li>understand the historic extent and appearance of cultural landscapes</li> </ul> </li> <li>selective management of vegetation maintains views</li> <li>daytime skies are predominantly free of human-induced adverse impacts</li> <li>nighttime skies are predominantly dark, although artificial light might occur for visitor safety at some sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minimal intrusions occur to the natural soundscape</li> </ul>
<b>Park Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development footprints are limited to protect understory habitat structure so as to mimic natural plant and animal community diversity</li> <li>landscaping reflects natural plant communities and promotes grassland bird species</li> <li>limited mowing and minimization of multiple edge features occurs</li> <li>prescribed fire occurs in fire-dependent ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>historic properties are preserved and made readily visible and accessible</li> <li>some historic properties are used for public enjoyment and for park operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of views are protected that allow visitors to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience the extent of the gorge, river, forest, and rim</li> </ul> </li> <li>selective management of vegetation maintains views</li> <li>daytime skies are predominantly free of human-induced adverse impacts</li> <li>nighttime skies are predominantly black, although artificial light might occur for visitor safety at some sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minimal intrusions occur to the natural soundscape</li> </ul>

Table 2.6 Management Zone Summary (continued)

Zone	Overall Visitor Experience	Activities	Types of Facilities	Access
<b>Backcountry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors are immersed in nature away from conveniences</li> <li>opportunities are present for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sense of wildness</li> <li>solitude</li> <li>adventure and personal challenge</li> <li>exploration and discovery</li> <li>self-discovery</li> <li>self-directed learning</li> <li>appreciation of scenic and panoramic views</li> <li>unstructured recreational activities</li> <li>trail-based recreation (hiking and biking)</li> <li>overnight stays</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high solitude, self-reliant, non-motorized outdoor activities</li> <li>opportunities via backcountry hiking, footpaths, e.g. hiking, limited biking, and bird watching</li> <li>opportunities via developed trails for rock climbing</li> <li>opportunities for appreciation of area history through discovery of cultural resources within a predominantly natural setting</li> <li>overnight camping</li> <li>stock use is not permitted except in upland locations where appropriately designed single-track trails can limit damage from equestrian use</li> <li>opportunities exist for scientific research of mid-Atlantic deciduous forest, water, and rare plant communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>single-track hiking trails</li> <li>biking trails by exception, including stacked loop trails</li> <li>trailheads (at zone periphery)</li> <li>backcountry campsites (designated campsites with fire rings and vault toilet facilities – no road access)</li> <li>primitive campgrounds at zone periphery (developed campsites with tables, fire rings, and vault toilets – road access)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-motorized access via limited trails</li> <li>very limited motorized access along the zone perimeter and restricted to established state roads, administrative roads, and park roads</li> <li>very limited interior motorized access for administrative use only on established administrative and park roads</li> </ul>
<b>Frontcountry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors are in contact with nature fairly close to conveniences</li> <li>opportunities are present for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adventure and personal challenge</li> <li>exploration and discovery</li> <li>self-directed learning</li> <li>appreciation of scenic and panoramic views</li> <li>unstructured recreational activities</li> <li>trail-based recreation (hiking, limited biking, and limited equestrian use)</li> <li>overnight stays</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-motorized activities</li> <li>opportunities via developed trails, e.g. hiking, limited biking, rock climbing, and equestrian use of designated trails</li> <li>opportunities for appreciation of area history through discovery of cultural resources within a predominantly natural setting</li> <li>overnight camping</li> <li>stock use is not permitted except in upland locations where appropriately designed single-track trails can limit damage from equestrian use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>roads and parking</li> <li>hiking trails</li> <li>biking trails, including stacked loop trails</li> <li>trailheads</li> <li>picnicking facilities</li> <li>restrooms</li> <li>overlooks (developed)</li> <li>backcountry campsites (see definition above)</li> <li>primitive campgrounds (see definition above)</li> <li>developed campgrounds (developed campsites with tables, fire rings, vault toilets, and RV hook-ups – road access)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-motorized access via limited trails and roads</li> <li>motorized access on state roads, administrative roads, and park roads</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors are in contact with nature but are fairly close to conveniences</li> <li>opportunities are present for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sense of wildness</li> <li>adventure and personal challenge</li> <li>exploration and discovery</li> <li>self-directed learning</li> <li>appreciation of scenic and panoramic views</li> <li>unstructured recreation</li> <li>trail-based recreation (hiking and limited biking)</li> <li>river and riverbank recreation (whitewater boating, fishing, and swimming)</li> <li>overnight stays</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water-based activities (boating and fishing)</li> <li>opportunities via developed trails, e.g. limited hiking and limited biking</li> <li>opportunities for appreciation of area history through discovery of cultural resources within a predominantly natural setting</li> <li>overnight camping</li> <li>stock use is not permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>roads and parking</li> <li>trails and trailheads</li> <li>picnicking facilities</li> <li>restrooms</li> <li>boat launches and river access facilities</li> <li>fishing access</li> <li>backcountry campsites (see definition above)</li> <li>primitive campgrounds (see definition above)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-motorized access via limited trails and roads</li> <li>very limited motorized access on state roads, administrative roads, and park roads</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors have some contact with nature but are fairly close to conveniences</li> <li>opportunities are present for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>educational experiences</li> <li>creating a sense and awareness of the past</li> <li>trail-based recreation (hiking and limited biking)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learning opportunities focused on topics at cultural resources sites within historic settings</li> <li>frontcountry activities, e.g. walking, sightseeing, and limited biking</li> <li>stock use is not permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>roads and parking</li> <li>trails and trailheads</li> <li>picnicking facilities</li> <li>restrooms</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>motorized access via state roads and park roads</li> <li>non-motorized access via trails</li> </ul>
<b>Park Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors are close to modern conveniences</li> <li>opportunities are present for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>obtaining visitor services</li> <li>visiting educational and recreational facilities</li> <li>staying overnight</li> <li>sightseeing</li> <li>trail-based recreation (hiking and limited biking)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diverse educational activities</li> <li>diverse recreational activities</li> <li>park operations</li> <li>overnight camping</li> <li>hiking and limited biking</li> <li>stock use is not permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>backcountry trails</li> <li>trails and trailheads</li> <li>picnicking facilities</li> <li>restrooms</li> <li>river access facilities</li> <li>changing stations</li> <li>park admin offices</li> <li>park maintenance facilities</li> <li>primitive campgrounds</li> <li>developed campgrounds</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>motorized access via state roads and park roads</li> <li>non-motorized access via trails</li> <li>motorized access via shuttle might occur at congested sites</li> </ul>

**Table 2.7****New River Gorge National River  
Management Zoning Common  
to Alternatives 2 to 5**

- **Park Development Zones<sup>1</sup>**
- **River Corridor Zones<sup>1</sup>**
- **Historic Resource Zones<sup>1</sup>**
- **Some Backcountry Forest Zones<sup>1</sup>**  
(including the following site-specific areas – see Figure 2.2)
  - Fall Branch
  - Meadow Creek North
  - Glade Creek
  - Garden Ground
  - Stretcher Neck
  - Claremont
  - Above Thurmond
  - Rush Run
  - Sewell
  - Endless Wall
- **Some Frontcountry Forest Zones<sup>1</sup>**  
(including the following site-specific areas – see Figure 2.2)
  - Meadow Creek South
  - Arbuckle Creek
  - Babcock State Park
  - Kaymoor
  - Sunshine Buttress
  - Alabama
- **Communities in the Park that are Not Zoned**
  - Meadow Bridge
  - Prince
  - Thurmond
  - Brooks
  - Backus
  - Quinimont
  - Terry
  - Thayer

<sup>1</sup> While these zones are the same in terms of their location, what may actually happen in each zone would vary from alternative to alternative, reflecting the underlying primary ideas of each alternative concept.

## **2.4 Management Guidance and Actions Common to the Action Alternatives (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

### **2.4.1 Management Zoning (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

The NPS has identified five management zones for New River Gorge National River (see Table 2.6):

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| - Backcountry Zone    | - Historic Resource Zone |
| - Frontcountry Zone   | - Park Development Zone  |
| - River Corridor Zone |                          |

For Alternatives 2 through 5 the areas assigned to park development zones, historic resource zones, and river corridor zones would be the same (see Figure 2.3). While these zones would be the same in terms of their location, what might actually happen in each zone would vary from alternative to alternative, reflecting the overall management concept for each alternative (see Table 2.1 above).

Management zoning for some backcountry forest areas would be the same in Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Table 2.7). The park's most unfragmented forest areas would be consistently designated backcountry, recognizing that these areas are significant fundamental and other important resources of the park. The backcountry zones would be managed to protect and restore unfragmented forest blocks largely free of human disturbance and to offer opportunities for visitors to be immersed in nature, relying on non-motorized access.

Management zoning for some frontcountry forest areas would also be the same in Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Table 2.7). Forested areas of the park that have a greater extent of existing fragmenting features – such as roads and trails - combined with a history of heavy recreational use would be consistently designated frontcountry. Within these areas large contiguous forest blocks would generally be maintained, although development for visitor use facilities might occur that would cause some fragmentation. Visitors would access the frontcountry forest by roads and trails.

### **2.4.2 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Strategies**

Each GMP action alternative includes a common set of parkwide desired conditions (see Table 2.8). These provide guidance for fulfilling the park's purpose and for protecting the park's fundamental and other important resources and values. The desired conditions are the natural and cultural resource conditions that the NPS aspires to achieve and maintain over time. They are also the conditions necessary for visitors to understand, enjoy, and appreciate those resources. To accomplish the desired conditions the park would implement numerous management strategies. Some strategies are already in place. Some strategies would be new.



# KEY

 **Common Backcountry Zone**

 **Common Frontcountry Zone**

 **River Corridor Zone**  
(All River Corridor Zones are the same in Alternatives 2, 3, 4 and 5)

 **Historic Resource Zone**  
(All Historic Resource Zones are the same in Alternatives 2, 3, 4 and 5)

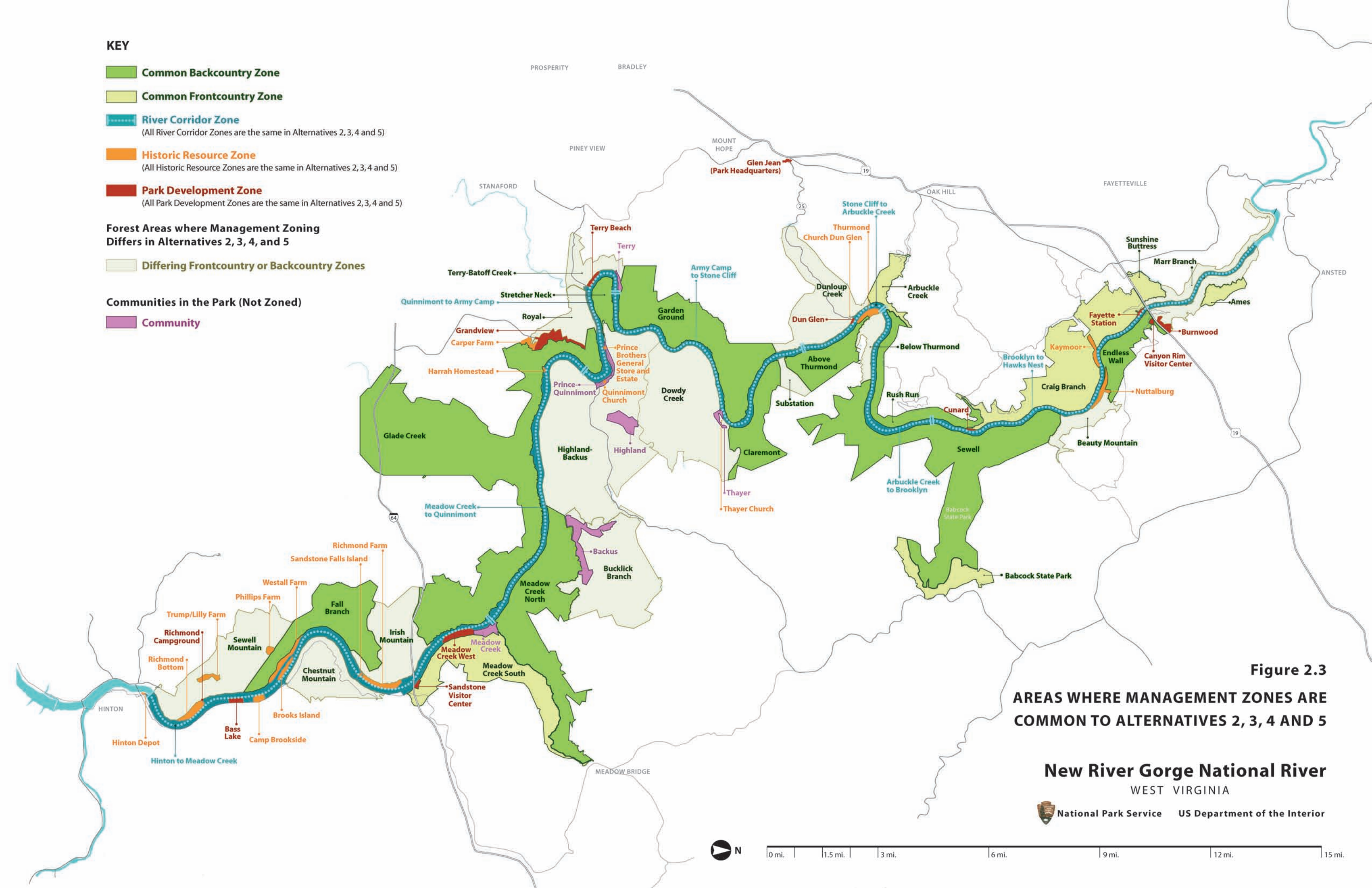
 **Park Development Zone**  
(All Park Development Zones are the same in Alternatives 2, 3, 4 and 5)

**Forest Areas where Management Zoning  
Differs in Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5**

 **Differing Frontcountry or Backcountry Zones**

**Communities in the Park (Not Zoned)**

 **Community**



**Figure 2.3**  
**AREAS WHERE MANAGEMENT ZONES ARE  
COMMON TO ALTERNATIVES 2, 3, 4 AND 5**

**New River Gorge National River**  
WEST VIRGINIA



National Park Service

US Department of the Interior



0 mi. 1.5 mi. 3 mi. 6 mi. 9 mi. 12 mi. 15 mi.

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Overall Park Management</b>	
<p><b>1</b> Managers make sound decisions about resource management based on professional studies and adequate planning that are consistent with applicable policies and regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare natural resource inventories and studies, historic resource inventories and studies, archeological inventories and studies, implementation plans, and other studies and plans that provide foundations for park management</li> <li>▪ Revise the park's strategic plan in accordance with the park's General Management Plan</li> <li>▪ Prepare a Resource Stewardship Strategy</li> <li>▪ Monitor natural resource, cultural resource, and visitor experience conditions and implement management measures as needed to achieve desired conditions</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> Park facilities and programs reflect a central theme that helps visitors better understand how the park is organized, the opportunities that are available, and how to travel in the complicated network of local roads and trails in the park's rugged terrain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement management actions to achieve the area-specific desired conditions consistent with the overall concept of the preferred alternative in the park's General Management Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Geologic Features and Processes Exemplifying the Geology of the Appalachian Plateau</b>	
<p><b>3</b> Natural geologic process/features persist largely unaltered by human-induced impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protect designated fossil localities where encountered</li> <li>▪ Identify locations prone to rock detachment</li> <li>▪ Manage high walls so that recovery occurs naturally</li> <li>▪ Stabilize all soils and landforms disturbed by facility development</li> <li>▪ Restore areas disturbed by ATVs; block vehicular access to rehabilitated ATV routes</li> <li>▪ Adhere to guidance in the <i>Climbing Management Plan</i> (NPS 2005b), particularly the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- install top anchors to reduce soil impacts</li> <li>- reduce proliferation of fixed anchors on cliff face</li> <li>- designate chalk-free zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Generally allow areas impacted by mining to restore naturally</li> <li>▪ Where feasible, restore areas disturbed by mining by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stabilizing refuse piles</li> <li>- removing overburden from drainages,</li> <li>- containing/eradicating invasive species,</li> <li>- controlling or mitigating acid mine drainage</li> <li>- implementing vegetation restoration</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ For mine benches, generally take the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- catalog and classify mine benches for condition and disposition</li> <li>- maintain benches for their historical context where appropriate</li> <li>- otherwise mitigate failing or hazardous mine benches where feasible</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Free Flowing Waters of the New River System and its Hydrologic Features and Aquatic Habitats</b>	
<p><b>4</b> The mosaic of hydrologic features, including the maintenance of a free-flowing segment of the New River, its tributaries, and associated processes, reflect a natural river/stream ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove man-made obstructions in the river that are no longer in use – such as abandoned bridge piers</li> <li>▪ Avoid or minimize alterations to the river channel when developing river launch facilities</li> <li>▪ Manage stormwater so that rainfall-runoff dynamics and sediment delivery and transport processes occur at natural levels</li> <li>▪ Restore natural drainage patterns where they have been disturbed (e.g., Marr Branch)</li> <li>▪ Allow tributary streams to migrate naturally</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor flows in Wolf Creek and take management actions as appropriate to mitigate impacts of municipal groundwater withdrawals</li> <li>▪ Protect upland wetlands and their processes</li> <li>▪ Determine and recreate natural flow regimes (including coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit periodic maximum flood)</li> <li>▪ Work with transportation planning, permitting, and resource management agencies to eliminate or minimize future placement of bridge piers in river and stream channels when bridges are repaired or replaced</li> </ul>
<p>5 Physical, chemical, and hydrological properties and dynamics of water reflect natural water quality conditions (water quality is improving)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain the existing NPS ambient water quality monitoring program (including continuous water quality monitoring at Thurmond)</li> <li>▪ Implement water quality monitoring for streams not presently monitored (e.g. Short Creek, Fern Creek, Rush Run, Ephraim Creek, Fire Creek, Farleys Creek, Fall Branch)</li> <li>▪ Obtain water quality information from the WVDEP for Mann Creek</li> <li>▪ Assure funding to continue operation of the USGS stream gage</li> <li>▪ Establish a perennial stream gauging program</li> <li>▪ Attain a better understanding of the hydrology of tributary streams, including flood characteristics and extents, flow characteristics, time and travel, river mileage, and channel morphology</li> <li>▪ Use a whole-watershed management strategy to protect the park's water resources with the goal of minimizing threats to water quality from sources both inside and outside the park</li> <li>▪ Conduct water and sediment sampling upstream and downstream in the park</li> <li>▪ Conduct ecological risk assessment to plants and animals using results from sampling</li> <li>▪ If dangerous levels of contaminants are found, conduct systematic sampling to find source area and mitigate, as appropriate</li> <li>▪ Continue to work with WVDEP, the Plateau Action Network, Fayette County, Summers County, Raleigh County, local communities, public service districts, and other appropriate groups to protect and enhance the water quality of the New River and its tributaries within the park</li> <li>▪ Eliminate direct discharge of primary sewage into tributaries and increase effectiveness of existing secondary treatment systems</li> <li>▪ Identify and mitigate failing waste pumping systems within the park</li> <li>▪ Implement a program to provide public education and technical assistance to landowners within and adjoining the park regarding maintenance of on-site disposal systems</li> <li>▪ Make excess capacity of NPS wastewater treatment facilities available for use by adjoining neighborhoods, where practicable</li> <li>▪ Expand availability of sanitation facilities at developed visitor facilities, as needed</li> <li>▪ Provide sanitation facilities at heavily used sites in remote areas of the park</li> <li>▪ Work with outfitters to provide sanitation facilities at privately-owned remote sites used for outfitted paddler river</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<p>6 Hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rest stops and camping</li> <li>▪ Evaluate mine drainage for negative impacts to surface water quality and mitigate where feasible</li> <li>▪ Model and/or map likely locations of special aquatic habitats, creating a dynamic map that is responsive to the transient nature of some of these habitats and the developing scientific data</li> <li>▪ Describe special aquatic habitats and develop best management practices capable of providing preliminary protection (these BMPs would be a “first defense” for habitats until their specific locations and characteristics could be identified and an individually appropriate protection plan can be provided)</li> <li>▪ Manage trails and other access to minimize impacts to special habitats, and integrate information on special aquatic habitats into trails and maintenance plans</li> <li>▪ Eliminate introduction of non-native species to aquatic ecosystems</li> <li>▪ Eliminate actions to supplement or maintain select non-native species in aquatic ecosystems</li> <li>▪ Allow select introduced species that may alter some processes and interactions (e.g. continue WV State black fly treatments)</li> <li>▪ Work with WV DNR, WV Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, and other entities to ascertain the status of the candy darter population and to identify and implement measures needed to maintain the population</li> </ul>
<p>7 Wetlands, natural seeps, vernal pools, and ephemeral streams persist and rare species in these habitat features are protected</p>	
<p>8 A nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river and small stream banks that includes a natural gradation of appropriate native plants and animals occurring from the water’s edge to upland forest; leaves, coarse woody debris, and other organic materials accumulate and persist at natural patterns and levels in riparian habitat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop floodplain maps for lower reaches of the New River main stem and tributaries</li> <li>▪ Identify threatened and endangered critical habitats and limit activities that would adversely impact them</li> <li>▪ Determine and recreate natural flow regimes (including coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit periodic maximum flood)</li> <li>▪ Remove exotic plants from riparian areas</li> <li>▪ Identify threatened and endangered critical habitats and limit visitor access</li> <li>▪ Limit overnight camping and open fires to areas with durable surfaces and less sensitive habitat (i.e., sand, gravel, cobble, rock) and require use of a fire ring or fire pan)</li> <li>▪ Discourage illegal ATV and truck crossing of the CSX rail line to access campsites along the river</li> <li>▪ Partner with river users to control impacts of day use</li> <li>▪ Limit day use of river lunch stops downstream of Cunard to existing sites with durable surfaces and less sensitive habitat</li> <li>▪ Require visitors launching boats to use designated launch ramps and to keep vehicles out of the river</li> <li>▪ When restoring cultural landscapes within riparian areas, include a 50- to 100-foot wide buffer of native riparian habitat along the river</li> <li>▪ Maintain an unfragmented connection between the New River and the gorge rim from Terry Beach to Red Ash Island, from I-64 to Quinimont on river left, and the Stone Cliff segment</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with adjacent landowners to preserve critical riparian habitats</li> <li>As private land is acquired remove all un-useable and non-historic structures and hazardous materials within riparian areas and restore native riparian habitat</li> </ul>
<b>9</b> Cobble prairie and flatrock communities persist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibit camping, open fires, and developed park facilities in cobble and flatrock communities</li> <li>Extend or add boardwalks to protect areas of the flatrock community where visitor use occurs (e.g., Sandstone Island)</li> <li>Increase signage and patrols to protect flatrock communities</li> <li>Partner with river users to limit access to flatrock communities</li> <li>Implement an educational program on the value and global significance of the flatrock community</li> <li>Remove exotic species within designated boundaries of the park's two flatrock communities</li> <li>Identify and implement appropriate disturbance regimes to maintain the disturbance-mediated flatrock community</li> <li>Evaluate results of current burn research on flatrock communities</li> <li>Estimate flood conditions necessary to create primary succession conditions and work to perpetuate these flows</li> <li>Inventory rare plant species and exotics/invasives to determine their respective roles in succession</li> <li>Establish long-term monitoring plans</li> <li>Study the growth and reproduction characteristics of existing rare plants in cobble and flatrock communities</li> </ul>
<b>The Park's Forest</b>	
<b>10</b> Contiguous forest exists over a range of elevation and moisture gradients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize irreversible modifications of contiguous (unfragmented) forest blocks</li> <li>Locate development on sites outside or at the edge of contiguous (unfragmented) forest blocks</li> <li>Design facilities to promote forest continuity and to limit impacts to forest interior species</li> <li>Conduct prescribed burns in fire-dependent ecosystems (e.g., rimrock pine communities)</li> <li>Implement measures to limit impacts of right-of-way maintenance by others (non-NPS) to the park's forests</li> <li>Monitor soil and vegetation conditions in climbing areas and take management actions appropriate to mitigate climbing impacts</li> <li>Monitor soil and vegetation conditions in rimrock forest areas and take management actions appropriate to mitigate climbing impacts</li> <li>Work cooperatively with Babcock State Park to achieve backcountry forest management objectives</li> <li>Complete a development management plan for the management of early successional habitats on the Hilton Strip and in other large blocks of early successional habitats</li> </ul>
<b>11</b> Habitat mosaic is maintained and continues to support an abundance and diversity of rare and significant animal and plant species and communities. Exemplary communities in this mosaic include: cliffs, abandoned mine portals, hemlocks, rimrock pine, mixed mesophytic forests, oak forests, riparian forests, and mature bottomland forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain native plant diversity</li> <li>Increase plant diversity in areas where the plant community has been compromised by exotic species, invasive natives, and non-native pests</li> <li>Detect forest pests, forest composition, and forest structure trends within specific forest types or on specific physiographic sites</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain xeric oak-hickory forests</li> <li>▪ Maintain and allow mixed-mesophytic forests to expand</li> <li>▪ Maintain the high diversity of birds now supported by the park's natural communities</li> <li>▪ Protect rare animals</li> <li>▪ Maintain key abandoned mine portals to support sustainable populations of rare and significant species such as Allegheny woodrats, cave salamanders, Indiana bats, two species of big-eared bat, and other bat species</li> <li>▪ Maintain Eastern Hemlock communities</li> <li>▪ Maintain cliff communities and sustain populations of rare and significant species</li> <li>▪ Maintain rimrock pine communities</li> <li>▪ Maintain rights-of-way using environmentally-sensitive techniques</li> <li>▪ Reduce wildlife-human confrontations</li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively with WV DNR to monitor hunted game harvest, population status, and long-term viability of game species within the park</li> </ul>
<b>12</b> Natural ecosystems are unaffected by air quality – e.g. ozone, acid precipitation, fugitive dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and mitigate causes of air pollution impacts within the park</li> <li>▪ Control fugitive dust emissions from construction sites and construction vehicles</li> <li>▪ Design park facilities to facilitate traffic movement thereby reducing emissions from idling vehicles</li> <li>▪ Submit park vehicles to emissions testing</li> <li>▪ Establish a program to assess the incidence of foliar ozone injury to plants</li> <li>▪ Implement measures to enable detection of ozone levels that are damaging to plants</li> </ul>
<b>13</b> Opportunities to experience natural quiet remain substantially free of human intrusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify appropriate levels of human-caused sound for various areas of the park</li> <li>▪ Improve vegetative buffers along major roads carrying traffic through the park</li> <li>▪ Reduce the acreage in the park that needs close mowing or "weed whipping"</li> <li>▪ Use traffic calming measures to slow traffic on park roads and on state roads, where possible</li> </ul>
<b>14</b> Daytime and nighttime skies are predominantly free of human-induced impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinate with local governments and landowners to minimize actions that impact clear daytime skies (e.g., open burning)</li> <li>▪ Work with EPA and state officials to ensure National Ambient Air Quality Standards are met to minimize haze caused by ozone and particulate pollution especially in summer months</li> <li>▪ Limit artificial lighting to areas where security, human safety, and specific cultural resource requirements must be met</li> <li>▪ Identify areas where artificial lighting is being used but is not necessary; remove artificial lighting from these areas and restore the natural lightscape</li> <li>▪ Where artificial lighting is required, use minimal impact lighting techniques</li> <li>▪ Work with park neighbors, WV DOT, FHWA, and other local/state/federal agencies to restore and maintain natural lightscape conditions</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with WV DOT and the New River Parkway Authority to minimize impacts of lighting associated with the New River Parkway</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Historic Places and Their Associated Cultural Resources</b>	
<p><b>15</b> Remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, and historic archeological sites are managed according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Within historic resource zones and park development zones – preserve, make accessible, and interpret the following resources:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ruins of coal tipples, conveyors, and headhouse structures related to the historic coal mining industry</li> <li>- ruins associated with the historic lumbering industry</li> <li>- ruins and landscapes associated with settlements and agriculture</li> <li>- CCC-era structures</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Within historic resource zones – eliminate non-historic and modern structures and intrusions, except those needed for visitor use</li> <li>▪ Within backcountry zones, frontcountry zones, and river corridor zones, maintain in good condition the following resources:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ruins of coal tipples, conveyors, and headhouses structures related to the historic coal mining industry</li> <li>- ruins associated with the historic lumbering industry</li> <li>- ruins and landscapes associated with settlements and agriculture</li> <li>- CCC-era structures</li> </ul> <p>Interpret the above-listed resources when public access is possible</p> </li> <li>▪ When removing vegetation and stabilizing historic resources in backcountry zones, frontcountry zones, and river corridor zones, limit forest fragmentation and modifications to natural features (e.g., aquatic or riparian resources) whenever possible</li> <li>▪ Preserve remnant coal outcrops for future interpretation</li> <li>▪ Stabilize hazardous features at coal mining sites using passive mitigation techniques</li> <li>▪ Gate and fence mine openings that are potentially accessible to visitors</li> </ul>
<p><b>16</b> Some historic railroad routes and lumbering roads are converted to trails; those that are not converted to trails recover naturally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convert some significant historic railroad routes and lumbering roads located outside of backcountry zones to trails and rehabilitate them to their historic width, grade, and alignment</li> <li>▪ Convert some ephemeral railroad routes and lumbering roads in backcountry zones to single-track trails</li> <li>▪ Allow all other historic railroad routes and lumbering roads to recover naturally</li> </ul>
<p><b>17</b> Sensitive prehistoric and historic archeological sites and resources are stabilized and protected against destruction from vegetation, erosion, and human-induced disturbance; continuing research and fieldwork are emphasized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve and protect sensitive prehistoric archeological sites and resources in their natural settings where they occur outside of park development zones</li> <li>▪ Preserve, protect, and interpret sensitive prehistoric archeological sites and resources where they occur within park development zones</li> <li>▪ Use techniques such as increased surveillance and proper routing of trails to prevent degradation through “pot hunting” and compaction</li> <li>▪ Manage vegetation at archeological sites to prevent degradation through soil erosion and tree fall</li> <li>▪ Educate visitors about the significance and fragility of archeological sites and resources</li> <li>▪ Continue research on topics and areas of the park about which relatively little is known</li> </ul>



**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<p><b>18</b> Resources that hold particular meaning to the park's traditionally associated people and groups are fully understood and managed in a sensitive manner and interpreted where appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct research for full understanding of ethnographic resources</li> <li>▪ Gather oral histories</li> <li>▪ Develop interpretation plans to include traditional people and the meaning of park resources to their heritage</li> <li>▪ Consult with traditionally associated people and groups and encourage them to participate in appropriate park activities</li> <li>▪ establish procedures to provide access to resources that hold special meaning to traditionally associated people</li> </ul>
<p><b>19</b> The park's museum collections represent the appropriate breadth of collections that represent all interests of the park</p>	
<p><b>20</b> The park's museum collections are properly housed and curated, made available for research, and appropriately tell the park's story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the <i>Park Museum collections Management Plan</i> (NPS 2008) as it relates to New River Gorge National River</li> <li>▪ Implement the <i>New River Gorge Collection Management Plan</i> (NPS 2004a)</li> </ul>
<b>Extraordinary Scenic Resources and Views</b>	
<p><b>21</b> Panoramic views of the river, forest, and rim in and around the gorge are protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement vegetation management measures to maintain views of the river, forest, and rim, as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- very limited management in backcountry zones</li> <li>- limited management in river corridor zones</li> <li>- selective management in frontcountry zones and park development zones</li> <li>- selective management in historic resource zones consistent with the cultural landscape treatment</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively with local governments and landowners to protect scenic resources in and around the gorge</li> </ul>
<p><b>22</b> Views of cultural landscapes are protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement vegetation management measures to maintain views of cultural landscapes, as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- very limited management in backcountry zones</li> <li>- limited management in river corridor zones</li> <li>- selective management in frontcountry zones, historic resource zones, and park development zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively with local governments and landowners to protect views of cultural landscape resources in the park</li> </ul>
<b>Exceptional Opportunities for Exploration, Adventure, Discovery, Solitude, and Community</b>	
<p><b>23</b> Visitors to the park enjoy the many high quality experiences it has to offer – to explore history, to seek adventure, to feel solitude, to be challenged, and to share life experiences with others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance the classic park experiences consistent with the preferred overall management concept in the park's GMP, including: including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- paddling the river</li> <li>- Sandstone Falls</li> <li>- Grandview</li> <li>- Endless Wall</li> <li>- Canyon Rim</li> <li>- Fayette Station Road</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance the opportunities for visitors to have the park's important visitor experiences consistent with the preferred overall management concept in the park's GMP, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appreciating life in the gorge – the human history story</li> <li>- appreciating/experiencing the wildness of the landscape</li> <li>- experiencing the power of the river</li> <li>- experiencing scenic beauty</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<p><b>24</b> Interpretive and educational programs increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain and expand the park's diverse and active interpretive program and continue to refine, expand and improve existing programs and media, including ranger-led interpretive programs, publications, exhibits, interactive media, web sites, and programs utilizing emerging technology, etc.</li> <li>▪ Increase effective venues for providing ranger-led programs to expanded audiences, such as local residents and visitors who come to the park primarily for recreation. Examples might include developing amphitheaters in major park camp-grounds or partnering with community libraries, school auditoriums, theaters or other venues capable of seating large groups.</li> <li>▪ Continue to develop new education programs which benefit area youth and sustain and increase the park's priority and commitment to formal education and curriculum-based programming for students and teachers from elementary to college levels. Expand the in-class, curriculum-based, K-6 education program, middle school watershed program, and other in-school programs.</li> <li>▪ Increase and improve in-park, on-site educational programs and support school field trip opportunities through partnerships and/or grants or other funding and by developing an on-site program areas, such as the Dun Glen/Thurmond area, which offer easy access to prime examples of the park's natural, cultural and recreational resources and are within an easy drive for many schools.</li> <li>▪ Findings of scientific research enhance management decisions and increase public appreciation and understanding of the park's resources</li> <li>▪ Natural resource education on stewardship and contemporary resource preservation is emphasized with visitors and with local community residents</li> <li>▪ In-person and via the internet, visitors encounter a variety of intriguing media that stimulate their understanding of the park's fundamental and other important resources and its stewardship mandate.</li> <li>▪ Prospective visitors are able to obtain timely and relevant information to help in trip planning and travel to the park</li> </ul>
<p><b>25</b> Park visitors are actively encouraged to visit other natural, cultural, scenic, and recreation sites in the region and to understand their relationship to New River Gorge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to make information about other sites in the region available to visitors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at all visitor centers and visitor contact facilities</li> <li>- on the park website</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include information about other sites in the region as part of the park's interpretive media and programs</li> <li>▪ Increase training and distribution of park information to partners and tourism professionals.</li> <li>▪ Assist regional CVBs and other tourism professionals in development of regional pod casts, travel cds, and other media promoting all of the highlights, resources, recreational opportunities and significant stories of the region. For example, travel narratives on cd, pod cast available at West Virginia Travel Plazas, or programs on local cable television access channels..</li> <li>▪ Expand partnerships with organizations promoting Appalachian arts, culture, and history to provide interpretive opportunities, including living history programs, cultural exhibitions, art shows, and musical programs.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<p><b>26</b> Visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate park visitor use and development to establish no hunting areas and safety zones at and around high visitor use areas, residential areas, and administrative use areas</li> <li>▪ Adopt and enforce non-conflicting state hunting regulations on park lands that are open for hunting; publish park specific regulations and closures in the Superintendent's Compendium</li> <li>▪ Work with the WV DNR to include notice of park-specific regulations in their annual hunting and trapping regulations summary</li> <li>▪ Inform park visitors, neighbors, and cooperators of park lands regarding those areas that are open to hunting and those areas that have been identified as no hunting or safety zones</li> <li>▪ Provide information related to the State of West Virginia's General Hunting Regulations, especially as they relate to hunter and visitor safety</li> <li>▪ Using a variety of media, provide early and easy access to clear, complete, and efficient way-finding and directional information that will help to make any experience with the park hassle-free. Maintain and expand visitor information at visitor centers, in publications, on the web, and through roving interpretation to help ensure a safe visit and avoid injury.</li> <li>▪ Expand partnerships with other agencies, such as COE and US Coast Guard, to present public programs on key issues, such as water safety and hunting safety.</li> <li>▪ Improve NPS identity at key recreation access sites, such as the Cunard and Fayette Station river launches.</li> <li>▪ Maintain staff law enforcement and emergency response capabilities commensurate with levels and patterns of visitor use</li> <li>▪ Maintain cooperative agreements with emergency service providers providing support for fire protection, law enforcement, emergency medical services, search and rescue, and management of hazardous material incidents</li> <li>▪ Continue to collaborate with WV DNR and commercial whitewater outfitters to enhance safety and river navigation training for river guides</li> <li>▪ Continue to collaborate with private paddling user groups to enhance safety and river navigation training for trip leaders</li> <li>▪ Continue to require accreditation for commercial rock-climbing guide services and individual guides</li> <li>▪ Maintain park roads to ensure visitor safety; close roads when slope failures threaten integrity</li> <li>▪ Make improvements to visitor use areas where circulation deficiencies pose safety hazards Seek to provide visitors safe and legal access to the river where active rail lines are present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discourage visitor illegal crossing of active rail lines</li> <li>- where possible seek to develop underpasses or overpasses by which visitors can safely and legally cross active rail lines</li> <li>- seek to acquire legal crossing of active rail lines in locations where visitor illegal crossings are concentrated</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Protect visitors from hazardous materials that may be present in buildings and at abandoned industrial sites</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<p><b>27</b> Conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor visitor experience conditions in park management zones and implement management measures as needed to achieve desired conditions</li> <li>▪ Monitor and manage use of backcountry river lunch stops, campsites, and fishing areas to minimize visitor conflicts</li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively with commercial and non-commercial interests to manage climbing, hiking, biking, and other special uses to minimize visitor conflicts</li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively with WV DNR to manage whitewater paddling use on the New River, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- periodic updates to the <i>Limits of Acceptable Change River Management Plan</i> (WV DNR 1998a)</li> <li>- annual monitoring and data collection needed to evaluate the indicators of social and resource conditions on the river</li> <li>- appropriate river management responses based on annual reports of river conditions</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Continuously manage hunting in a manner to reduce or eliminate user conflicts</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriate Kinds and Levels of Visitor Use and Facilities</b>	
<p><b>28</b> Visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, the minimum necessary to serve visitor needs and protect resources and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide accessible restrooms at visitor use sites</li> <li>▪ Where practicable, provide restroom facilities at recreation sites that are heavily used as lunch stops, campsites, or fishing areas</li> <li>▪ Seek to provide adequate parking at visitor use sites</li> <li>▪ Make improvements to existing river access facilities to reduce visitor crowding and to mitigate existing impacts on park resources</li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively on an ongoing basis with commercial outfitters and private paddler groups to identify and address issues related to river access and use</li> <li>▪ Enhance connectivity in the park through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new road links</li> <li>▪ Manage traffic circulation and parking to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>▪ Provide visitors with a variety of travel modes to access the park and specific visitor use sites</li> <li>▪ Provide a variety of trails that enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ Provide river access facilities that enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> <li>▪ Provide a variety of camping experiences for different types of visitors</li> </ul>
<p><b>29</b> Where feasible, new development is sited away from geologic hazard zones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create database with existing landslide data sets</li> <li>▪ Conduct annual analysis to identify new landslide activity</li> <li>▪ Review historic photographs to establish past landslide locations and to determine where mine spoils are located</li> <li>▪ Mitigate hazards where appropriate</li> </ul>
<p><b>30</b> Accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to make accessibility improvements at existing facilities with the goal of making all visitor facilities at developed visitor use areas accessible to visitors and employees with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Make all practicable efforts to provide disabled access at new visitor facilities</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take all feasible steps to ensure effective communication with individuals with hearing, visual, and cognitive disabilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>31</b> Appropriate recreational use continues to be welcomed in places where it does not impact resources or interpretive activities; all public activities in the park are determined to be appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before permitting new public activities in the park, use NPS criteria to determine if and when they are compatible</li> <li>Cooperate with local groups to find alternative locations for special events</li> <li>Prohibit activities in the park that would damage park resources or that would not contribute to public understanding of park resources and values</li> </ul>
<p><b>32</b> Visitor facilities are designed and located with minimal impact on park resources and are aesthetically pleasing and functional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current practices, facilities, and available resources for sustainable design and maintenance</li> <li>Use sustainable design and construction methods, techniques, and materials for all new development projects</li> <li>Seek LEED certification when rehabilitating existing structures and facilities or building new structures and facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>33</b> Commercial services in the park are limited to those that are necessary and compatible with the park purpose. If possible, commercial support services are based outside the park rather than inside.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships and Community Relationships</b>	
<p><b>34</b> The public appreciates the park and understands its significance as a unit of the national park system; local citizens find the park relevant to their interests and concerns, and assist in showcasing their heritage as an integral part of the park's interpretive and resource management programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggressively build the capacity of the recently created Friends of New River Gorge group</li> <li>Implement an Experience New River Gorge Program designed to provide community leader, business owners, and leaders of stakeholder groups an inside look at and greater understanding of park operations and its mission</li> <li>Expand educational programs to reach more local youth</li> <li>Sponsor or cosponsor frequent special events in communities within the park and in gateway communities outside the park</li> <li>Expand the amount and distribution of informational materials about the park both locally and throughout southern West Virginia region</li> <li>Expand coverage of park events and issues in the media</li> <li>Establish information kiosks in communities within the park and in gateway communities outside the park</li> <li>Meet routinely with local community and park user groups to discuss issues and to identify management responses, as appropriate</li> <li>Work with local communities to secure funds to restore and enhance historic and cultural features that are compatible with the park's themes</li> </ul>
<p><b>35</b> The scope and contribution of volunteer programs in resource management, interpretation and visitor services, maintenance, and administration are enhanced; the volunteer program is popular; all ages can participate in meaningful ways to benefit resources and visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the tasks that volunteers can perform in the park</li> <li>Develop and implement a plan for identifying and recruiting volunteers, especially those with the potential to become long-term and willing to commit to a regular work schedule</li> <li>Aggressively build the capacity of the recently created Friends of New River Gorge group</li> <li>Increase the use of interns from organizations such as local colleges, high schools, and other appropriate institutions</li> <li>Allocate NPS staff time for volunteer training</li> <li>Encourage staff involvement in community activities that support park-related values</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>36</b> Collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop and implement plans for historic resource treatment and interpretation in collaboration with non-profit and private sector partners, such as for:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early settlement/agricultural resource sites in the New River Parkway corridor (now River Road corridor)</li> <li>Prince Brothers General Store</li> <li>Thurmond</li> </ul> </li> <li>Identify opportunities where partnerships with non-profit and private entities could benefit the park and its partners</li> </ul>
<b>37</b> Mutual park management goals are efficiently realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop shared strategies for dealing with common NPS/State Park resource management issues</li> <li>Provide official trail connection between park units</li> <li>Provide complementary visitor experiences and interpretive programs</li> <li>Make information about all three parks available to visitors</li> <li>Avoid redundancy in visitor services and facilities</li> </ul>
<b>38</b> State and county resource management and regulatory agencies assist the NPS with accomplishing its mission at the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work cooperatively with state and county resource management and regulatory agencies 1) to make use of public programs available to landowners to manage resources and/or restore disturbed areas on private property, and 2) to enforce environmental regulations pertaining to the use of private property within the park</li> <li>Work cooperatively with state resource management agencies to accomplish various resource management goals related to water quality management, wildlife management, and cultural resource management.</li> </ul>
<b>39</b> Park user groups assist the NPS with accomplishing its mission at the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work collaboratively with the International Mountain Biking Association to develop new single-track trails</li> <li>Work collaboratively with members of the professional rock climbing community to implement actions recommended in the <i>Climbing Management Plan</i></li> <li>Work collaboratively with the West Virginia Professional River Outfitters to address issues related to use of the river for outfitted paddling</li> <li>Work collaboratively with the West Virginia Wildwater Association to address issues related to use of the river by private paddlers</li> <li>Identify other user groups with whom the NPS could work collaboratively to accomplish the park's mission</li> </ul>
<b>40</b> Stewardship of remaining private lands within the park is sensitive to the resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While taking all necessary steps to not interfere with property rights, implement a program of working with landowners to promote sensitive stewardship of resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park where they occur on private property</li> </ul>
<b>41</b> Communities remaining within the park are sustained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not seek to acquire property within the communities remaining within the park boundary except where it includes fundamental and other important resources or values that are threatened by past or imminent private landowner stewardship action</li> <li>Work cooperatively with local leaders and residents to implement actions in the communities remaining within the park that would sustain community character, protect natural and cultural resource, and encourage – as appropriate – development of visitor amenities and interpretive media</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<p><b>42</b> NPS and the its gateway communities work cooperatively to define and accomplish shared goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a leadership role in enhancing civic engagement to promote better understanding and communication between the NPS and its neighbors outside the park</li> <li>Provide technical assistance to the three counties and six gateway communities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>address issues of mutual concern</li> <li>accomplish long-term goals that are compatible with the park's purpose</li> <li>encourage community efforts to implement smart growth strategies</li> <li>encourage community efforts to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>43</b> Collaborative partnerships within the region result in a seamless network of regional parks, open spaces, trails and heritage sites within southern West Virginia that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protects and enhances biodiversity</li> <li>creates an array of educational and appropriate recreational opportunities</li> <li>supports a vibrant and sustainable tourism economy</li> <li>leverages funds and/or capacity of partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a leadership role in convening partner groups having common and/or overlapping interests in the region</li> <li>Facilitate collaborative goal setting, decision-making, and development of an overall vision for the region as a tourist destination (and how it would be marketed)</li> <li>Provide technical assistance to partner groups with communications, seeking grants, and training, as appropriate</li> <li>Facilitate develop of coordinated visitor programs that tell complementary stories of the region's heritage</li> <li>Facilitate development of a network of scenic roads and trails that connects the region's attractions and that informs visitors stopping at attractions about other places of interest and the programs offered throughout the region</li> <li>Prioritize working with partners to provide connections between the Gauley, Meadow, New, and Bluestone Rivers via designated trails and scenic roadways</li> </ul>
<b>Park Operations</b>	
<p><b>44</b> Staffing from all sources is adequate in numbers and deployment to implement and support the management objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek funding for additional permanent full-time resource management personnel</li> <li>Seek funding to create a new permanent full-time position with the primary responsibility to oversee the park's partnerships</li> </ul>
<p><b>45</b> The park is actively seeking non-appropriated funds to support its preservation and interpretation mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize and allocate staff resources to facilitate obtaining alternate support, such as through cooperative and interagency agreements, grants, donations, cost recovery, concessions, fees, earned income, and similar opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>46</b> Management facilities support efficient park operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Burnwood Center Development Concept Plan</li> <li>Design new management facilities to preserve the natural and cultural environments, to provide for resource conservation, to provide for energy efficiency, to limit chemical emissions, and to foster education about sustainable design</li> <li>Make water and sewer service available to management facilities where park staff are based</li> </ul>
<p><b>47</b> The park addresses climate change by reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, using sustainable practices, working to understand the effects of climate change, and engaging the public on the issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model strategies and technologies that reduce the park's environmental impact</li> <li>Participate in the Climate Friendly Parks Program; inventory park-based greenhouse gas emissions and create and enact an action plan of sustainable strategies to mitigate those emissions</li> <li>Encourage scientific studies and inventories to identify and document changes caused by climate change, to predict</li> </ul>

**Table 2.8 Parkwide Desired Conditions and Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Them (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<p>potential changes, and to assist in identifying potential responses to climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage park employees, partners, visitors, gateway communities, and the general public on the issue of climate change, informing them of what responses are being taken at the park and encouraging them to take action to reduce their own carbon footprint</li> </ul>
<p><b>48</b> Historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where practicable rehabilitate historic structures for adaptive reuse</li> <li>Where practicable manage historic buildings to produce income that offsets the costs of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>Rent houses to employees and other tenants at market rates</li> <li>Rent rehabilitated commercial buildings for commercial uses at market rates</li> <li>Lease fields and farm buildings through the NPS agricultural and historic leasing programs</li> </ul>
<p><b>49</b> Park staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, and partners work in a safe and secure environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all park facilities and structures are maintained according to applicable regulations for their use, such as office, work space, meeting space, etc.</li> <li>Mitigate health and safety risks of all facilities and structures according to a comprehensive integrated pest management plan and program</li> </ul>
<b>Land Protection</b>	
<p><b>50</b> The park boundary and land acquisition strategy is sufficient to protect the nationally significant qualities of the park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally acquire land within the authorized park boundary</li> <li>Generally do not acquire land within the six remaining communities in the park (Hinton, Meadow Creek, Backus, Highland, Prince/Quinnimont, Terry, and Thurmond) except when a property includes resources and values that are fundamental to the park that require protection or a property is needed to implement management actions in the GMP</li> <li>Make needed administrative or legislative changes to the park boundary</li> <li>Update the park's Land Protection Plan to ensure that its recommendations adequately protect the significant qualities of properties</li> <li>Focus land acquisition efforts on the highest priority properties still to be protected and on properties needed to implement the park's general management plan</li> <li>Seek to acquire railroad rights-of-way as soon as possible following their abandonment</li> <li>Coordinate with the state of West Virginia to explore the potential for transfer of Babcock State Park to the NPS</li> <li>Work collaboratively with local governments and landowners to protect scenic resources and important resource areas in and around the gorge</li> <li>Explore the feasibility of boundary expansion to encompass important resource areas in and around the gorge, particularly rare species habitats and high quality watersheds</li> <li>Develop access right-of-way agreements or easements for areas where traditional access routes jeopardize resource values</li> </ul>



### 2.4.3 Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)

#### ■ Experiencing the Park

Some management actions common to Alternatives 2 to 5 would enhance the important experiences that visitors would have in the park (see Table 2.10).

Alternatives 2 to 5 would each retain the classic park experiences at Sandstone Falls, the Sandstone Visitor Center, Grandview, Thurmond, Nuttallburg/Kaymoor, Endless Wall, Canyon Rim, and Fayette Station Road. Management actions common to the alternatives would affect only two of these sites – the Endless Wall and Fayette Station Road. These would be implemented to protect resources, to enhance the visitor experience, and to improve visitor safety (see Table 2.10).

#### ■ Visitor Orientation

In Alternatives 2 to 5 visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Sandstone would continue as the primary venues where visitor orientation would occur. Smaller visitor centers at Thurmond and Grandview would continue as secondary locations where visitors would be oriented to the park. How visitors are oriented to the park at the visitor centers would vary depending upon the underlying management concept for each alternative.

### 2.4.4 Resource Management

#### ■ Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems (Alternatives 2 to 5)

**Resource Stewardship Strategies.** The management strategies shown in Table 2.8 are the actions that the NPS would implement to achieve and maintain over time desired natural resource conditions. The strategies address the management issues challenging the park relevant to maintaining natural processes and restoring natural systems. Implementation of these strategies would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5.

**Unfragmented Forest Protection.** The park's most intact and unfragmented forest areas would be protected through zoning of a core group of backcountry forest areas (see Table 2.9 and Figure 2.3). The management actions that could occur within a given backcountry forest area could differ from alternative to alternative. However, the underlying set of desired forest conditions would be the same in these areas would be the same. Regardless of the alternative management actions would seek to:

- maintain large contiguous tracts of intact forest with negligible site-specific forest fragmentation
- ensure that native plant species dominate the forest community

**Table 2.9**

New River Gorge National River  
**Backcountry Forest  
Management Zoning Common  
to Alternatives 2 to 5<sup>1</sup>**  
(see Figure 2.3)

- Fall Branch
- Meadow Creek North
- Glade Creek
- Garden Ground
- Stretcher Neck
- Claremont
- Above Thurmond
- Rush Run
- Sewell
- Endless Wall

<sup>1</sup> While these zones are the same in terms of their location, what might actually happen in each zone could vary from alternative to alternative, reflecting the underlying primary ideas of each alternative concept.

**Table 2.10 Important Visitor Experiences (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions common to Alternatives 2 to 5)</i>	
<p><b>Appreciate life in the gorge – the human history story</b></p>	<p><b>Throughout the park there are cultural resource sites where human history stories could be told.</b></p> <p>Thurmond and Nuttallburg would be focal areas for telling stories of life in the gorge during its industrial period (as in Alternative 1).</p> <p><u>How other cultural resources would be treated, where stories would be told, and how visitors access sites where stories would be told, would differ in Alternatives 2 to 5, depending upon the overall management concept for each alternative.</u></p>
<p><b>Appreciate/ experience the wildness of the landscape</b></p>	<p><b>A sense of wildness dominates the landscape setting in most areas of the park.</b></p> <p>While paddling the river visitors would be transported to remote and wild areas in the upper, middle, and lower gorge, relying on the existing network of river accesses which make possible a variety of paddling experiences in a wild landscape setting.</p> <p>The park's most intact unfragmented forest blocks would be managed as backcountry forest preserving their wild character and enhancing the perception of the park's wildness as visitors experience the park. <u>In Alternatives 2 to 5, the NPS would manage a minimum of 43 percent of the park as unfragmented blocks of backcountry forest.</u></p> <p>Visitors venturing into the park's forest would explore the park making their way along the park's existing network of trails at times near the water's edge and at times looking into the gorge. <u>Exploration of the park by bicycle – pending adoption of a special regulation and subject to a development of a trail management plan – would occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones and would occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones.</u></p> <p>Visitors camping in the forest would experience nature and the sense of solitude that comes from spending extended time in the outdoors at existing campsites <u>and at a new developed campground in the middle of the park.</u></p> <p><u>Other actions taken to manage the park's forest and to enhance opportunities for visitors to appreciate and experience its wildness would differ in Alternatives 2 to 5, depending upon the overall management concept for each alternative.</u></p>
<p><b>Experience the power of the river</b></p>	<p><b>Throughout the park the power of the river is evident wherever visitors can be on the river, be at the river's edge, or view the river from afar.</b></p> <p>The New River would carry paddlers along its freeflowing course through the gorge cut by its waters deep in the Appalachian Plateau. Those who ride the river as it descends through the gorge would feel its power and experience the thrill of adventure and discovery as the water flows turbulently over and amidst massive boulders transported through time from the cliff walls above. River experiences would be available from the existing network of river accesses for paddlers of all skill levels during most spring, summer, and fall months. <u>Addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (above Meadow Creek) would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips from.</u></p> <p>At the river's edge visitors could see, smell, and hear the river, feeling its power as they sense around them the scale of the gorge shaped by the flowing water. From the existing network of river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge visitors would experience the river as it flows calmly yet powerfully on its course northward; elsewhere visitors would experience a wild river flowing turbulently around rocks and boulders. In the River Road corridor the river's edge experience would be enhanced by day-use area improvements included in the New River Parkway project (as in Alternative 1) <u>as well as enhancements to the Brooks Falls river access. A new day-use area near provide visitor access to the river's edge near Meadow Creek.</u></p> <p><u>Elsewhere in the park, how visitors would access the river to experience its power would differ in Alternatives 2 to 5, depending upon the overall management concept for each alternative.</u></p>

**Table 2.10 Important Visitor Experiences (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions common to Alternatives 2 to 5)</i>	
<b>Experience scenic beauty</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park its scenic beauty is evident from roads, trails, overlooks, and the river.</b></p> <p>From existing roads visitors would have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. In the south end of the park, as visitors travel New River Parkway from Sandstone to Hinton the scenic beauty of the park would be evident in the dramatic landscape visible from the New River Bridge and along the parkway (as in Alternative 1). In the north end of the park, efforts would be made to enhance opportunities for scenic vistas along Fayette Station Road by working with WV DOH to add pull-outs (as in Alternative 1).</p> <p>Visitors traveling on existing trails would continue to have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river.</p> <p><u>Elsewhere in the park, the emphasis on where visitors would have these experiences would differ in Alternatives 2 to 5, depending upon the overall management concept for each alternative.</u></p>
<b>Classic Park Experiences</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions common to Alternatives 2 to 5)</i>	
<b>Paddling the New River</b>	<p>Paddlers would continue to experience the power of the river and the park's wild character and natural beauty as they float the river, stopping to picnic, fish, visit natural and cultural sites of interest, and/or camp. <u>Opportunities for paddlers of all skill levels would be enhanced by addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (above Meadow Creek) that would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips. Opportunities for disabled paddlers would be enhanced by addition of disabled boater access at the Cunard and McCreery (Terry Beach) river accesses. The condition of river recreation sites popular for river lunch stops, camping, and fishing would be enhanced by improving access and providing restroom facilities where practicable. More frequent river patrols would provide visitor education and, as needed, increased enforcement of existing regulations related to group size, trash removal, and human waste removal where restrooms are not available.</u></p>
<b>Sandstone Falls</b>	<p>The boardwalk and recreational facilities at Sandstone would continue to bring visitors to the water's edge where they can feel the power of the river, experience its beauty, and learn about the park's significant natural resources (as in Alternative 1).</p>
<b>Sandstone Falls Visitor Center</b>	<p>At the Sandstone Falls Visitor Center visitors would continue to be oriented to the park (as in Alternative 1); <u>how visitors are oriented to the park at the visitor center would differ in Alternatives 2 to 5, reflecting the underlying management concept for each alternative.</u></p>
<b>Grandview</b>	<p>Social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities at Grandview would continue in a setting where visitors can experience the scenic beauty of the park, the wildness of its landscape, and the power of the river (as in Alternative 1). Park visitors would enjoy safer access to the Turkey Spur overlook (as in Alternative 1). Theatre goers would continue to enjoy productions at an updated Cliffside Amphitheatre (as in Alternative 1). <u>Visitor safety and the quality of the visitor experience would be enhanced as a result of improvements to pedestrian and vehicular circulation.</u></p>
<b>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg</b>	<p>Trails would provide visitor access to historic mining areas at Kaymoor and Nuttallburg. Nationally significant mining resources at Nuttallburg would be interpreted for visitors and made more accessible through parking and trail improvements (as in Alternative 1).</p>
<b>Experiencing the Cliffs</b>	<p>The massive sandstone cliffs in the Endless Wall area and elsewhere would continue to attract visitors seeking to experience their beauty as well as the thrill of adventure, exploration, and solitude sensed of rock climbing (as in Alternative 1). <u>Access to the Endless Wall would be made easier and safer by adding parking and by establishing designated and maintained trails to climbing routes. Climbing and other visitor activities in the Endless Wall area would also be limited to day use.</u></p>

Table 2.10 Important Visitor Experiences (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)

Classic Park Experiences (continued) <i>(underlined elements are additions common to Alternatives 2 to 5)</i>	
Canyon Rim	At Canyon Rim visitors would continue to be oriented to the park at the visitor center and to have opportunities to view the river and the gorge from existing overlooks (as in Alternative 1); <u>how visitors are oriented to the park at the visitor center would differ in Alternatives 2 to 5, reflecting the underlying management concept for each alternative.</u>
Fayette Station Road	Fayette Station Road would continue to be a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where visitors would experience the historic travel route across the river, learn about the park's industrial heritage, view the river, and feel its power (as in Alternative 1). <u>Improvements to Fayette Station Road and parking facilities, as well as implementation of shuttle service during periods of high visitor use, would result in a safer visitor experience with more opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources and with fewer opportunities for visitor conflicts.</u>

- ensure that the habitat mosaic supports a diversity and abundance of rare and native plants communities and a high diversity of birds
- ensure that the effects on the park's unfragmented forest as a result of activities occurring within the park are negligible to minor

**Riparian Corridor Protection.** The park's riparian area would be protected through zoning of seven riparian corridor zones that would encompass riparian areas along most of the New River (see Figure 2.3). The seven zones would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5. The management actions that might occur within a given riparian corridor zone could differ from alternative to alternative. However, the underlying set of desired riparian conditions would be the same. Management actions – regardless of the alternative – would:

- ensure that a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river
  - ensure that natural processes support a high integrity sustainable aquatic and riparian ecosystem
  - ensure that hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms experiencing natural ecological interactions
  - ensure that the effects on the park's riparian resources as a result of activities occurring within the park are negligible to minor
- **Wildland Fire Management (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Promotion of ecosystem health could be facilitated with the application of prescribed fire as a management action in fire dependent forest communities to promote native vegetation diversity. For example, the following vegetation community types could benefit from the use of prescribed fire:

- rim pine (Virginia pine, pitch pine) communities
- xeric oak forests

Wildland fire in the park would be managed to diminish risk and consequences of severe wildland fires and, to the extent possible, restore and protect the natural biological diversity and the natural disturbance regime of park ecosystems. To meet resource objectives, planned ignitions would also be considered as a method of restoring and maintaining cultural landscapes, such as historic farms, vistas, old fields, etc.

The NPS is responsible for providing primary wildland fire protection on federal lands. Local volunteer fire departments, in cooperation with the West Virginia Division of Forestry Fire, provide fire protection for private properties adjacent to federal lands.

A community-based approach to wildland fire issues would involve close collaboration and cooperation with neighboring agencies having a vested interest in areas of wildland fire issues.

#### ■ **Water Quality Management (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Future management of the park would include an expanded water quality management effort by the NPS. This expanded water quality program – which would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5 – would be focused in five areas.

**Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Program.** NPS would continue to collect ambient water quality data. If funding permits, the park would seek to 1) increase the number of fecal coliform samples analyzed, 2) expand the network of sampling stations to include all tributaries to the New River, 3) increase monitoring during high flows associated with storm events and snowmelt, 4) make quality assurance and quality control a more visible component of the monitoring program, 5) maintain one water quality database at park headquarters, and 6) enter monitoring data into the EPA's STORET database.

**Wastewater Management at Visitor Use Areas.** NPS would seek 1) to expand availability of sanitation facilities at developed visitor facilities, and 2) to support remote activities in frontcountry and backcountry zones, such as river rafting, hiking, biking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, trail maintenance, fire fighting, ranger stations, and similar activities. Highest priority for providing sanitation facilities would be high visitor use areas, including publicly-owned river rest stops heavily used as lunch stops by outfitted paddlers, heavily used trailheads, and heavily used backcountry campsites. NPS would also work cooperatively with the owners of heavily used lunch stops that remain in private ownership to provide and maintain adequate sanitation facilities. At Thurmond wastewater collection and

treatment would be provided to existing and new visitor use facilities, houses, and commercial uses.

**Water Quality Management Planning Technical Assistance.** NPS would expand its program of working cooperatively with WVDEP, the Plateau Action Network, Fayette County, Summers County, Raleigh County, local communities, public service districts, and other appropriate groups to protect and enhance the water quality of the New River and its tributaries in the park vicinity. Expanded technical assistance would include some or all of the following: 1) data collection, mapping, and analysis (such as GIS services), 2) assistance with securing grants for various water quality management studies and plans, 3) land use planning assistance to address point and non-point sources of pollution, 4) scoping and administering contracts for professional services, and 5) hosting special events or programs to assist local governments with watershed-based water quality management planning.

**Public Education and Technical Assistance to Landowners.** NPS would seek to implement a program to provide public education and technical assistance regarding the importance of maintaining on-site wastewater disposal systems (OSDSs). The program would target landowners in the park and in nearby communities along the New River and its tributaries where fecal coliform counts are high and the suspected source is malfunctioning OSDSs. As part of this program, the NPS would assist local communities with securing grants for funding for OSDS maintenance and system replacements.

**Joint Use of NPS Wastewater Treatment Facilities.** Where practicable the NPS would make excess capacity in park wastewater treatment facilities available for treatment of wastewater flows from private lands in adjoining neighborhoods. This may happen only where 1) excess capacity is not reasonably expected to be needed to support park operations or visitor use, 2) additional flows would enhance operational efficiency of NPS wastewater treatment facilities, and 3) costs for treatment of effluent originating outside the park would be reimbursed to the NPS. In addition, where practicable and where it would benefit plant efficiency and function, the NPS would plan new treatment facilities in the park so as to provide treatment capacity for wastewater flows from development on private lands within and adjoining the park.

#### ■ Cultural Resource Management (Common to Alternatives 2 to 5)

**Parkwide Cultural Resource Management Strategies.** The management strategies shown in Table 2.8 are the actions that the NPS would implement to achieve and maintain over time the park's desired cultural resource conditions. The strategies address the management issues challenging the park relevant to stabilizing and otherwise treating cultural resources. In addition to these specific strategies, resource conservation efforts would be implemented through public outreach and education to better inform the public of the threats to the park's



cultural resources and the efforts undertaken to protect them. Implementation of these strategies would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5.

**Cultural Resource Treatment Contexts.** In Alternatives 2 to 5, cultural resource treatment would occur in two contexts: historic resource zones and discovery sites.

- **Historic Resource Zones.** Seventeen cultural resource zones are identified in the park. These zones include the cultural resources that are fundamental or other important resources in the park. Management actions in these zones would preserve cultural resources while making them readily visible and accessible to visitors. While these zones would remain the same in Alternatives 2 to 5, the types of management actions would differ as a function of the overall alternative concept. In general the cultural resource management actions likely to be implemented in historic resource zones would involve a greater degree of restoration of historic structures and cultural landscapes when compared to the actions that would be taken to treat resources that are found in discovery sites.
- **Discovery Sites.** Cultural resources representative of the park's early settlement/agricultural and industrial era are abundant throughout the park and occur in all five of the park's management zones. Some would be managed and interpreted as discovery sites. Visitors would come upon and find discovery sites as they experience the park, primarily from trails and to a lesser extent from roads. Treatment actions at these sites would seek to balance natural and cultural resource management demands with the goal of maintaining ruins and mitigating degradation of cultural resources by natural resources and processes. Other management actions would be taken to protect cultural and natural resources from visitor impacts as well as to protect visitors from potential hazards. Interpretive waysides would be installed to tell the park's stories.

Sites selected for treatment as discovery sites in each alternative would depend on the underlying concept of each alternative. Resources that have been nominated to or determined eligible for the National Register would be given priority as potential discovery sites.

- **Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Viewshed studies indicate extensive areas in the park vicinity where new development – if it should occur in the future – would be visible from the park and would potentially impact the park setting, the visitor experience, and important resource areas (see Appendix F). Addition of these areas to the park is impracticable because of potential community impacts and cost. In lieu of boundary adjustments and land acquisition the NPS would seek to protect scenic resources from impacts of new development on these lands by working cooperatively with

communities and private landowners. Actions would include some or all of the following:

- Coordination with owners of land possessing outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge
  - notify owners regarding the outstanding scenic value of their property and the public interest in protecting those values
  - provide information to owners regarding the use of conservation easements to protect scenic values
  - where owners are potentially contemplating sale or development of land with scenic values, provide information regarding sustainable design and construction that would avoid or minimize impacts to scenic values
- Coordination with local governments
  - share information identifying lands with outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge
  - seek to involve NPS early on in the development review process when lands with outstanding scenic values are proposed for development
  - provide technical assistance with changes to the land development review process that would emphasize early coordination and issue identification upfront in the review process, before landowners have invested funds for preliminary site planning and design
  - seek agreements in principle that rezonings would generally not be granted for development projects involving lands with outstanding scenic values
  - provide technical assistance with development of land development policies and regulations to promote sustainable design and construction practices on lands with outstanding scenic values (i.e., clearing, grading, landscaping, erosion control, stormwater management, lighting, materials, building massing and colors)
  - provide technical assistance with development of an overlay district for lands with outstanding scenic values which provides for land development while simultaneously better protecting scenic values
  - when future revisions are contemplated to existing zoning regulations and land use plans, provide technical assistance with development of revised regulations and plans that would reduce or transfer the by-right development potential of lands with outstanding scenic values to property where such values are not present

- Coordination with professional advisors to owners of lands with outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge (i.e., attorneys, accountants, realtors, appraisers, engineers, surveyors, architects, and landscape architects)
  - share information identifying the outstanding scenic value of properties in and around the gorge and the public interest in protecting those values
  - provide information regarding the use of conservation easements to protect scenic values as an alternative to land development
  - encourage use of sustainable design and construction practices on lands with outstanding scenic values that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts to those values
  - encourage early coordination with local regulatory entities before preparing preliminary development plans for owners of lands with outstanding scenic values

#### 2.4.5 Visitor Use and Visitor Facilities (Alternatives 2 to 5)

##### ■ Hunting (Alternatives 2 to 5)

The full text of the newly amended hunting and fishing section of the New River Gorge National River legislation (codified at 16 United States Code Section 460m-20) now reads:

*“The Secretary shall permit hunting and fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the boundaries of the New River Gorge National River in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws, and he may designate zones, and establish periods when, no hunting or fishing shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, fish or wildlife management, or public use and enjoyment. Except in emergencies, any rules and regulations of the Secretary pursuant to this section shall be put into effect only after consultation with the appropriate State agency responsible for hunting and fishing activities. The Secretary shall permit the State of West Virginia to undertake fish stocking activities carried out by the state, in consultation with the Secretary, on waters within the boundaries of the national river. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of the State of West Virginia with respect to fish and wildlife.*

This section means (as discussed in Section 2.9.1 Alternatives Considered but Dismissed below) that there must be hunting and fishing allowed within the park, but that the NPS is also directed to ensure that these activities are conducted consistently with other resource management and public safety concerns, etc.

Therefore, certain areas may be closed to hunting, or certain species may be restricted from harvest, or other limitations may be placed on hunting and fishing within the park. In all cases except emergencies, the park would consult with the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources prior to adopting regulations covering fishing and hunting. While hunting and fishing would generally be consistent with state laws, limits, permit requirements, etc. some differences could arise within the park. Therefore, recreational visitors interested in hunting or fishing within the park are encouraged to review the park-specific regulations codified at 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 7.89 and specific closures or limits which are contained in the Superintendent's Compendium (available on the web at <http://www.nps.gov/neri/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm>).

The parkwide desired future conditions discussed in Table 2.8 provide the framework within which hunting would occur at New River Gorge. Some of these desired future conditions include:

- habitat mosaic is maintained and continues to support an abundance and diversity of rare and significant animal and plant species and communities
- visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park
- conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized
- appropriate recreational use continues to be welcomed in places where it does not impact resources or interpretive activities

Strategies to achieve these desired future conditions include:

- work collaboratively with WV DNR to monitor hunted game harvest, population status, and long term viability of game species within the park
- evaluate park visitor use and development; establish no hunting areas and safety zones at and around high visitor use areas, residential areas, and administrative use areas
- adopt and enforce non-conflicting state hunting regulations on park lands that are open for hunting; publish park specific regulations and closures in the Superintendent's Compendium
- work with the WV DNR to include notice of park specific regulations in their annual Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary
- inform park visitors, neighbors and cooperators of park lands that are open to hunting and those areas that have been identified as no hunting or safety zones
- provide information related to the state of West Virginia's General Hunting Regulations, especially as they relate to hunter and visitor safety

- continuously manage hunting in a manner to reduce or eliminate user conflicts

As in Alternative 1, in Alternatives 2 to 5 the NPS would continue to administer hunting within the park in accordance with the hunting and fishing regulations of the WV DNR. As part of a concerted effort to ensure the safety of visitors to the park, designated safety zones that are closed to hunting would continue to be identified and would be listed and mapped in the Superintendent's Compendium. Generally, safety zones would include public gathering locations such as parking lots, trailheads, campgrounds, visitor centers, and picnic areas and would radiate out from these sites in a concentric circle an additional 500 feet. The identification and designation of safety zones would continuously be evaluated based on visitor use patterns and when new visitor facilities are developed or expanded.

Additional efforts to ensure public safety would include but not be limited to specific law enforcement operations targeted at ensuring compliance with state hunting regulations. These operations may include special enforcement operations to target safety violations, vehicle checkpoints to identify unsafe practices such as the presence of loaded weapons carried within vehicles, and identification of potential alcohol use associated with hunting activities. Park rangers would conduct vehicle and foot patrols within high visitor use areas, including park roads and trails, to insure compliance with designated no hunting zones and safety zones. All no hunting zones and safety zones would be identified on maps made available to the public. Maps and related safety information would be posted on bulletin boards at trail heads, parking lots and hunting areas. Maps and related information would also be available at park headquarters and visitor centers. In addition, downloadable versions of the maps and related information would be posted on the park's internet web site.

The NPS would work with WV DNR to list all safety zone closures and other park specific safety and resource related regulations in the state's printed and on-line hunting regulations in an attempt to better inform the hunting public and visitors to the park. This information would also be made available at visitor centers within the park and at park headquarters. Additionally, the NPS would develop a hunting specific section on the official park website that would provide complete information on the hunting program of the park, all safety measures, wildlife conservation concerns, and relevant links to the WV DNR website.

The alternative approaches to hunting which follow all assume that hunting would continue, but they vary in their specifics, as to whether hunting would be continued as is, enhanced, or modified in various specifics. The alternatives that were laid out in the screening process and retained for further consideration include:

■ **Continuation of Existing Hunting Program (in Alternatives 2 and 3)**

In this option hunting within the park would continue to be managed in accordance with the hunting and fishing regulations of the WV DNR. Hunting would generally be permitted throughout the park. A few areas would continue to be closed to hunting for safety reasons, including:

- areas designated as safety zones in the park compendium
- the areas within the historic boundaries of Grandview State Park and Sandstone Falls State Park
- the area within the boundary of Babcock State Park (which is managed by the State of West Virginia)

■ **Enhanced Hunting Program (in Alternative 5)**

In this option, hunting would continue largely as it is today except for the following:

- the historic Grandview State Park would be opened to limited bow hunting via a permit/lottery system
- upland gamebird habitat would be increased by creating/restoring early successional habitat in historic resource zones (where such management is consistent with the park's cultural landscape restoration goals)
- the NPS and WV DNR would collaboratively monitor park specific game harvest levels and hunter use levels, using a hunter registration/permit process and designated hunt units; this process would include the distribution of information to hunters (hunt unit maps, regulations, etc.) and a mandatory end-of-season hunter questionnaire provided by the NPS
- a cooperative game management plan would be developed by NPS and WV DNR that would be specific to designated hunt units in the park and would identify management strategies to improve hunter satisfaction and to enhance outreach opportunities to both hunters and non-hunters

■ **Modified Hunting Program (in Alternative 4)**

In this option hunting would continue largely as it is today. However, the following activities would be phased out over a five-year period:

- hunting of native "pest" species (raccoons, opossums, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, crows, skunks, woodchucks and weasels)
- use of hunting dogs outside of applicable seasons for training purposes

In addition, as in the Enhanced Hunting Program, the following actions would be implemented:



- the NPS and WV DNR would collaboratively monitor harvesting
- a cooperative game management plan would be developed by NPS and WV DNR

#### ■ **Hiking and Equestrian Use (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Alternatives 2 to 5 would include expansions to existing informal trails in climbing areas to provide designated access that would protect rim rock pine vegetation and the Allegheny woodrat (a state-designated species of concern) including:

- in the Endless Wall area, a designated trail at the base of Endless Wall and a new trail to Ambassador Butte (with trailhead facilities)
- in the Sunshine Butte area, a designated trail at the base of Sunshine Butte and a new trail to Sunshine Butte (with trailhead facilities)
- in the Bubba City area, a designated trail at the base of the Bubba City climbing area and a new trail loop (with trailhead facilities in the Bubba City area)
- in the Junkyard area, trailhead facilities for existing climbing trails

The Laing Loop Nature Trail in the Burnwood area would be expanded. NPS would also provide technical assistance to the city of Hinton to help secure a trail connection from the city to the river.

NPS would also work collaboratively with its gateway community partners, state agencies, railroad companies, and private landowners to develop trail connections from the park to nearby communities and other visitor attractions, such as Hawks Nest State Park, Babcock State Park, the Gauley River National Recreation Area, Ansted, Oak Hill, Mount Hope, Beckley, and Meadow Bridge (see Figures 2.4, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.10).

#### ■ **Biking (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

In Alternatives 2 to 5 where new trails are developed in the park (as described in the previous section) they could be designed for joint use by hikers and bikers, depending on environmental and safety conditions. Existing hiking trails could also be considered for joint use, where practicable.

During development of the park's new trail management plan the NPS would determine where joint use trails would be developed (see Section 2.13.1 below). The following principles would generally guide their design:

- in frontcountry zones, river corridor zones, historic resource zones, and park development zones – biking could occur on a variety of trail types
- in backcountry zones – biking could occur only on singletrack trails

**Table 2.11**

New River Gorge National River  
**Backcountry, Frontcountry, and  
 River Corridor Zones – Access  
 Management Prescriptions**  
 (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)

■ **In Backcountry Zones**

**Motorized Access.** Very limited motorized access for visitors and administrative use (restricted to established state roads, administrative roads, and park roads); parking located along zone perimeters

**Non-Motorized Access.** Non-motorized access for visitors and administrative use via established trails and new singletrack trails (to be primarily located on existing unmaintained trails); bikes permitted only on singletrack trails; horses permitted in some upland areas in the Highland-Backus and Dowdy Creek areas; trailhead parking located along zone perimeters

■ **In Frontcountry Zones**

**Motorized Access.** Motorized visitor and administrative access and parking in zone interiors (largely utilizing established state roads, administrative roads, and park roads); new road development to serve new visitor use areas

**Non-Motorized Access.** Non-motorized access via established trails and new trails of a variety of types (to be primarily located on existing unmaintained trails); bikes permitted on a variety of trail types; horses permitted in some upland areas in the Bucklick Branch and Craig Branch areas

■ **In River Corridor Zones**

**Motorized Access.** Very limited motorized access (via established state roads, administrative roads, and park roads); new road development to serve new visitor use areas

**Non-Motorized Access.** Non-motorized access for hikers and bikers via existing and new trails of a variety of types (to be primarily located on existing unmaintained trails); horses not permitted

■ **In Historic Resource Zones**

**Motorized Access.** Motorized access via state roads and park roads

**Non-Motorized Access.** Non-motorized access for hikers and bikers via existing and new trails of a variety of types (to be primarily located on existing unmaintained trails); horses not permitted

■ **In Park Development Zones**

**Motorized Access.** Motorized access via state roads and park roads; motorized access via shuttle might occur in congested areas

**Non-Motorized Access.** Non-motorized access for hikers and bikers via existing and new trails of a variety of types (to be primarily located on existing unmaintained trails); horses not permitted

- in historic resource, river corridor, and park development zones – biking could occur on a limited basis on a variety of trail types

An exception to these assumptions would be that in Alternatives 2 to 5 no biking would be permitted on trails in the Endless Wall backcountry zone.

■ **Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

As in Alternative 1 the NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible. As in Alternative 1 priorities would be to secure legal crossings where visitors frequently illegally cross tracks at Hinton, Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, Todd Beach, Southside Junction, Piney Creek, Dowdy Creek, Nuttallburg, Keeney Creek, Kaymoor, Short Creek, the Lower Railroad area, and Fayette Station.

■ **Access and Parking (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Park management zoning would provide the framework for decision-making as to where motorized and non-motorized access would be appropriate for visitors and administrative use (common to Alternatives 2 to 5) (see Table 2.11). The nature of permitted access would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5 in park development, historic resource, and river corridor zones because these zones are the same for each action alternative. Differences would occur in the remainder of the park where areas are allocated to either backcountry or frontcountry zones. When considering access to the park, areas of frontcountry would have greater potential access because roads and parking facilities would be permitted in interior areas of zones. In contrast, in backcountry areas roads and parking would be limited to the perimeter of the forest blocks defined by the park's subareas (see Figure 2.5).

A number of specific access and parking improvements would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5:

- At Grandview a number of pedestrian and vehicular circulation issues exist that pose potential visitor safety issues and that diminish the quality of the visitor experience on busy days. The NPS would address these issues by implementing a number of improvements to the main parking lot, to directional signage, to the main overlook trail, to bus drop-off facilities, and to the visitor contact station.
- Existing congestion on Fayette Station Road (WV SR 82) would be alleviated through implementation of an alternative transportation system (ATS) during peak visitation days. The ATS would be composed of a concession-based shuttle that would operate on the Fayette Station Road loop. It would primarily serve private paddlers and other visitors; outfitted paddlers would likely continue to ride from the take-out on outfitter-operated buses. The shuttle would likely pick-up and drop-off riders at a

satellite parking facility located on NPS property on the plateau near the Fayette Station Road/US 19 intersection. It would make frequent stops, such as at points of interests with interpretive waysides, river overlooks, climbing areas, trailheads, the old Fayette Station Bridge, the Fayette Station day-use area, and the Fayette Station river access.

- The NPS would work cooperatively with the WV DOH to design and construct improvements to WV SR 25 from Glen Jean to Southside Junction.
- The NPS would rehabilitate the existing visitor parking area above the CSX right-of-way on the Fayette Station Road. This would address parking needs for private paddlers on non-peak days.
- Parking facilities would be developed in locations where boundary adjustments are proposed to address visitor needs for parking in the Junkyard, Ambassador, Buttress, Fern Buttress, Keeney Creek, Dowdy Bluff, and Polls areas (see Section 2.4.1 above).
- New trailheads with parking would be provided for all new trails (see Hiking and Equestrian Trails and Biking Trails above). Where trailhead parking occurs in backcountry zones it would be located at the edge of zones so as to minimize forest fragmentation.
- At Cunard, Alternatives 2 to 5 all assume that existing problems with inadequate parking for private paddlers on peak visitation days would be alleviated by 1) expanding the existing private paddler parking area and 2) by adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road

#### ■ **New River Bridge Tour (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

The park's 1982 GMP noted that, "Another opportunity to view the gorge could be from an existing maintenance catwalk underneath the U.S. 19 bridge near Canyon Rim." The GMP recommends that the NPS "investigate the feasibility of safe visitor access with the West Virginia Department of Transportation." The State of West Virginia has indicated that they would like to enter into an agreement with the NPS to provide such a bridge tour.

In Alternatives 2 to 5 the NPS would work with the WV DOT in developing the potential to enhance educational and recreational opportunities through use of the maintenance catwalk beneath the New River Bridge on U.S. Route 19. NPS would issue a Commercial Use Authorization or other permit of contract for this service. Guided tours on the walkway would require a safety system to be installed and maintained by a professional operator. The design and nature of the safety system coupled with the physical limitations of the catwalk would necessitate limiting a

commercial use authorization or other permitting method to a single operator (company). Therefore, NPS would use competition to select the tour operator.

■ **Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access) (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

In Alternatives 2 to 5 the conditions of the recreation sites currently used by visitors for picnicking, swimming, camping, and fishing would be enhanced and maintained in good condition. Recreation sites would be inventoried, monitored, and evaluated based on a variety of factors including size, amount of ground cover loss, damage to trees or to other resources, and amount of litter/human waste present. While most sites would remain largely undeveloped, others would have access improved and restrooms installed nearby. All sites would require visitors to pack out all trash and solid human waste. Some sites might require substantial visitor education efforts to reduce impacts to acceptable levels. The park might need to consider regulations restricting group size, designating or reserving sites, restricting fires to fire rings or fire pans, or eliminating use in areas with sensitive resources.

Additional visitor facilities associated with Alternatives 2 to 5 would include camping, picnicking, and river access facilities, as follows:

- at Stone Cliff, the existing primitive campground now located in the riparian zone, would be relocated to the bench level; the new facility would include a primitive campground, picnic facilities, and comfort stations
- at DunGlen, remove the group campsite located within the 100-year floodplain of the New River

Pending completion of a future camping management plan, camping would continue to be permitted at undesignated campsites anywhere in the park and at primitive campgrounds without fees or reservations. The camping management plan would evaluate the appropriateness of alternative parkwide camping management strategies including Continuation of Current Management (see Section 2.13.2 below).

NPS would continue to make accessibility improvements at existing and new facilities with the goal of making all visitor facilities at developed visitor use areas accessible to visitors and employees with disabilities (as in Alternative 1). Where practicable given river conditions, NPS would also seek to provide river access for disabled boaters that would enable them to experience safe river trips of different lengths and levels of difficulty (as in Alternative 1).

#### 2.4.6 Working with Local Communities (Alternatives 2 to 5)

##### ■ Sustaining Communities within the Park (Alternatives 2 to 5)

**Hinton.** As the park's largest gateway community located partially in the park, Hinton would receive high priority in NPS's efforts to work cooperatively with its gateway community partners. Section 2.4.8 below identifies the general types of actions that the NPS would seek to implement to strengthen the connection between gateway communities, their residents, and the mission of the NPS at New River Gorge National River. In addition the NPS and the city of Hinton would work collaboratively on several specific initiatives, including but not limited to the following:

- identification and implementation of appropriate treatments for significant cultural resources within the park boundary
- development of safe and legal pedestrian access to the New River waterfront
- development of a hiking and biking trail on river right from Hinton to Camp Brookside
- development of a hiking and biking trail on river left from the Hinton Bridge to the New River Parkway (working cooperatively with the New River Parkway Authority and the WV DOH)
- continued support for existing successful special events – such as Hinton Railroad Days – as well as development of new special events that would attract visitors to the park and the city
- implementation of interpretive programs focused on Hinton's railroading history

In general the NPS would not seek to acquire private land within the park boundary in Hinton except where:

- a property includes resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park that require protection from pending private actions that would adversely impact those resources, or
- a property is needed to implement management actions in the GMP

More specifically, the NPS would be interested in acquiring land owned by the CSX at the Hinton Yard, if and when it is no longer required for railroad operations. Similarly, the NPS would be interested in acquiring historically significant railroad-related structures in the vicinity of the Hinton Depot and the Hinton Yard.

**Thurmond.** The small enclave of occupied private residences at Thurmond would remain as "a community within a park attraction". The nature of the "park attraction" would vary from alternative to alternative in terms of the extent to which visitors and park employees would be visiting and/or living in the community and

new commercial activity would be present. The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with residents to address issues associated with living in the historic town. As in Alternative 1, actions would be implemented by the NPS to provide safe drinking water and wastewater treatment via a community water system and a community wastewater collection and treatment system. In Alternatives 2 to 5 these services would be extended to all new occupied visitor facilities, houses, and commercial uses.

**Other Communities in the Park.** The NPS would work cooperatively with local leaders and landowners in the communities that remain within the park boundary to define shared goals and to implement strategies to accomplish shared goals. The remaining communities that are entirely within the park (other than Hinton and Thurmond discussed above) include Meadow Creek, Backus, Highland, Prince/Quinnimont, Terry, and Thayer (see Figure 2.3).

In general the NPS would not seek to acquire private land within these communities except where:

- a property includes resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park that require protection from pending private actions that would adversely impact those resources, or
- a property is needed to implement management actions in the GMP

In the future, collaboration between the NPS and these communities would generally seek to sustain community character, protect natural and cultural resources, and encourage, as appropriate, development of visitor amenities and interpretive media. The types of actions that could occur include the following:

- technical assistance with organization of a community partner group in each of the park's communities (if one does not already exist) that would represent residents in the collaborative effort with the NPS
- collaborative development of a community vision plan that provides a shared understanding among local residents and the NPS regarding the future of the community within the context of the surrounding park
- technical assistance with managing change in the community - such as redevelopment and new development – to reduce potentially adverse impacts on natural resources, cultural resources, local residents, and park visitors
- technical assistance with development of strategies and plans to address specific issues associated with visitor activities within or adjoining the community
- technical assistance with documenting the significance of cultural resources and for assessing and implementing treatment options for privately-owned

historically significant buildings, archeological sites, and other cultural resources

- technical assistance with obtaining grants for infrastructure improvements for water supply, wastewater management (including centralized treatment systems and/or individual on-site disposal systems), roads, and utilities
- technical assistance with control of invasive plant and animal species
- technical assistance with private sector development of appropriate visitor services
- provision of NPS visitor facilities that enhance visitor experience and help to reduce potential conflicts between visitors and local residents, such wayfinding signage, information kiosks, comfort stations, parking facilities, and trail connections to adjoining park attractions, as appropriate

Some or all of these activities would be priorities in the eight communities within the park. Priorities would be dependent upon the context of each community within the different alternatives (see Sections 2.5.5, 2.6.5, 2.7.5, and 2.8.5 below).

#### **2.4.7 Land Protection (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

##### **■ Park Boundary Adjustment**

The NPS has completed a boundary study to identify the need for a park boundary adjustment and to consider all alternatives in lieu of a boundary adjustment that would protect the park's resources and/or address management issues (see Appendix F). Findings of the Boundary Study have concluded that seven boundary adjustments are needed to enhance the visitor experience and to address operational issues (see Table 1.5 and Appendix E). Collectively the seven proposed boundary adjustments would add approximately 222.2 acres to the park.

Findings of the Boundary Study have also indicated that there are three areas where it would be appropriate to delete certain privately-owned lands from the park (see Table 1.6 and Appendix E). Collectively the three proposed boundary adjustments would delete approximately 75.4 acres from the park.

##### **■ Land Protection Priorities (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Land protection would continue as funding permits until most land remaining within the park boundary is protected through voluntary sale of property to the NPS or through voluntary conveyance of conservation easements to the NPS or to a qualified non-profit land trust. The exception would be that the NPS would generally no longer seek to acquire private property within the six communities remaining inside the park (see Sustaining Communities within the Park above).

In the future the land protection program would focus efforts on the highest priority properties still to be protected. High priority would also be placed on working with



willing sellers of private property that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- the property includes significant resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park
- the property is needed to implement the recommendations of the general management plan
- the property would provide safe and legal access to the New River
- the property is needed to enhance park operations and management
- the property is within the six proposed boundary adjustments (see Table 2.7 and Appendix F)
- the property is in imminent threat of change to non-park uses as a result of pending private investment, and/or
- the property is a large property whose acquisition would contribute significantly to federal ownership within the park boundary

Priorities for working with willing sellers would be further refined to focus on acquiring properties that are important to addressing specific park issues, such as:

- Babcock State Park (if and when the state of West Virginia no longer desires to own and manage the property, as previously occurred at Grandview and Sandstone Falls State Parks)
- the Prince Amtrak Station
- abandoned railroad rights-of-way

■ **Stewardship of Private Land Remaining within the Park Boundary (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Approximately 17,000 acres within the park boundary remain in private ownership. In the future the NPS would seek to acquire these lands where they are outside of the six existing communities that remain in the park (see Sustaining Communities within the Park above). Until such time as these lands can be acquired from willing sellers the NPS would work cooperatively with landowners to promote sensitive stewardship of the privately-owned resources and values that are fundamental or important to New River Gorge National River. The program would focus on:

- private lands with significant fundamental and other important resources and values
- private lands that are highly susceptible to change, such as tracts with commercially viable mineral or timber resources or developable lands in proximity to the park's gateway communities where there is a strong market for residential or commercial development

- private lands with a history of prior disturbance, such as surface mining and recent clearcutting

While taking all necessary steps to ensure that the NPS would not interfere with private property rights, the goals of this program would be as follows:

- to improve communications with private landowners in order to promote their understanding of the NPS mission, policies and plans for the park
- to enable the NPS to better understand and address landowner concerns
- to respond to requests of individual landowners in dealing with park-related issues
- to work with landowners, as requested, in assessing conditions and resources on their properties and in helping them to evaluate their options for future uses
- to help facilitate strategies used by landowners that would result in protecting fundamental and other important resources and values on their lands while achieving reasonable economic and other goals, as appropriate
- to explore opportunities for cooperative agreements between the NPS and private landowners that would help achieve management goals for the park
- to organize and maintain a working group composed of outfitters and other commercial operations owning land within or near the park in order to promote dialogue and resolution of issues related to resource protection, visitor activities, and recreation development

A number of approaches would be considered for developing this program, such as management entirely by NPS staff in coordination with the NPS Lands Office, management in cooperation with a charitable non-profit organization, or management entirely by a non-profit organization.

The program described above is designed to foster sensitive stewardship of the special natural resources and unique features within the park that remain in private ownership. As the enabling legislation provides, timber harvest, mining, and development incompatible with the purposes of the park are prohibited. Since the NPS is directed to protect park resources and federal lands from damage or harm, including threats arising from adjacent lands, it will utilize available legal and constitutional approaches to address land protection matters, should the collaborative programs described above not resolve an issue.

#### **2.4.8 Partnerships (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

##### **■ Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

In the future the NPS would take a number of actions intended to make the park more relevant to its local and regional users by strengthening the connection

between the public and the mission of the NPS at New River Gorge National River. By strengthening this connection, the public's sense of ownership and pride in the park should increase as should its commitment to the stewardship of the park and its resources and values. Management actions aimed at communicating the NPS mission would generally include expansion of programs already underway at the park, although some actions would be new. The general types of actions would include:

- **Friends of New River Gorge.** The NPS would aggressively build the capacity of the recently created Friends of New River Gorge group by identifying, recruiting, and providing technical support to energetic and talented local leaders with the capacity to grow the organization. The Friends of New River Gorge could assist with many activities important to strengthening the park's connection to the community, such as 1) recruiting and managing volunteers, 2) reaching out to local communities and park user groups, 3) informing elected officials of park issues, 4) supplementing NPS staff capability, 5) conducting market research and awareness building, 6) delivering programs and staging events, 7) procuring equipment and services, 8) leveraging community support and talents to develop facilities (with NPS oversight), and 9) raising funds for programs, projects, capital needs, operations, and land acquisition from external sources.
- **Experience New River Gorge Program.** The NPS would implement a new program designed to provide community leaders, businesses owners, and leaders of major stakeholder groups an inside look and greater understanding of how the park is operated, how its resources are managed, and the issues facing the park. This would be accomplished through a sequence of immersion experiences during which local leaders would have behind the scenes, hands-on experiences in management of park resources and visitor activities. "Graduates" of the program would become ambassadors of the park and help to communicate to the broader public an understanding of the park and its issues.
- **Educational Programs.** The NPS would expand the scope and frequency of its environmental education programs to reach the local youth who will be the future stewards of the park. The curricula would be expanded to enhance student awareness of the national park system as a whole, the significance of New River Gorge National River as a unit of the national park system, and the ways in which youth could contribute to its stewardship.
- **Special Events.** The NPS would seek to sponsor or cosponsor special events in communities within the park and within its gateway communities on an annual or more frequent basis. The focus or attraction of these

events would differ from community to community and could be organized around historic themes, natural resource themes, recreational activities, or the need to address specific issues.

- **Informational Materials.** The NPS would expand public awareness of the park by 1) producing a greater variety of informational materials describing the park's significance, resources and opportunities, 2) by making sure that these materials include language that relates the park to the overall national park system, and 3) by more widely distributing these materials throughout southern West Virginia.
- **Media Relations.** The NPS would seek to expand coverage of park events and issues in newspapers and on television by developing relationships with editors and managers of local media outlets and by providing stories of interest.
- **Information Kiosks in Local Communities.** The NPS would seek to establish information kiosks at prominent locations in communities within the park and in its gateway communities. These kiosks would provide information about the park, including an overview of its significance as a unit of the national park system, its resources, stewardship guidance, visitor opportunities, and ways to become a park volunteer.

■ **Gateway Community Partnerships (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Community neighbor partners at New River Gorge National River include Summers, Raleigh, and Fayette Counties, as well as the six nearby incorporated communities that are the park's gateways – Hinton, Sandstone, Meadow Bridge, Beckley, Mount Hope, Glen Jean, Oak Hill, Minden, Cunard, Fayetteville, Winona, and Ansted. In the future the NPS would expand efforts to work cooperatively with these entities to define and accomplish shared goals. In the broad sense these goals would be:

- to address mutual interests in the quality of life of community residents, including matters such as compatible economic development and resource and environmental protection to anticipate, avoid, and resolve potential conflicts
- to protect park resources and values
- to provide for visitor enjoyment

NPS would take a leadership role in enhancing civic engagement to promote better understanding and communication between the NPS and its neighbors. Various civic engagement techniques would be utilized to enable members of the public to express concerns when they are affected by the park's actions and for the NPS to document its concerns and share them with all who are interested or involved.

NPS would encourage gateway communities to undertake measures to increase their sustainability and to address the threat of climate change. Through supportive partnerships with the parks, communities would be encouraged to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases and criteria air pollutants and to improve the resource use efficiency of their public and private buildings and facilities.

NPS would also make available technical assistance to the three counties and the park's gateway communities, as appropriate, to address issues of mutual concern. This could include the following types of technical assistance:

- innovative community planning aimed at 1) sustaining and enhancing the character of gateway communities, 2) providing for visitor services in gateway communities, and 3) avoiding potential adverse impacts of development in the counties and gateway communities on park resources and values (particularly avoiding impacts on scenic resources in and around the gorge, as identified in the Boundary Study (see Appendix F))
- computer mapping and database management using ArcGIS software (in support of community planning efforts)
- regional planning designed to provide a seamless network of parks (see Regional Tourism Partnerships below)
- watershed-based water quality management planning
- transportation system planning, including assistance with enhancement of road and trail connections between gateway communities and the park and design of alternative transportation systems where they would enhance park access
- potential improvements in energy efficiency and resource-use efficiency and in implementing aspects of sustainable design, using strategies that the parks themselves have already implemented successfully
- documenting the significance of related cultural resources adjoining or outside the park, as well as assessing/implementing treatment options for those properties found to be significant
- securing grants for projects and/or programs that would jointly benefit the park's neighboring communities and the park itself

■ **Regional Tourism Partnerships (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

The NPS recognizes that New River Gorge National River (and the other two national park units) in southern West Virginia is a major attraction within the region's growing tourism industry and that the health of the tourism industry is vital to the economic welfare of the region. The NPS would continue to seek to expand visitor opportunities at New River Gorge National River for appropriate types and levels of visitor use, including development of quality visitor facilities. The NPS anticipates

that over time visitation to the park would increase, helping to sustain and further contribute to the region's attraction as a multi-day tourist destination.

In the future the NPS would expand its participation in regional economic development planning efforts underway by the various regional planning agencies and organizations in southern West Virginia. The NPS would 1) take a leadership role in convening partner groups having common and/or overlapping interests in the region, 2) would work to help facilitate collaborative goal setting, decision-making, and development of an overall vision for the region as a tourist destination (and how it would be marketed), and 3) would provide technical assistance to these groups with communications, seeking grants, and training, as appropriate.

NPS would strengthen and enhance the connections between the park and the National Coal Heritage Area (NCHA). The NCHA and the park would cooperate to preserve and interpret coal heritage sites both within the park and in adjacent communities. The NCHA would undertake actions to provide for appropriate economic development in gateway communities, and to link them to the national and state park via trails, driving tours, and other mechanisms. Working in partnership with the NCHA, the park would focus on educational activities for children and adults.

NPS would also work collaboratively with its gateway community partners, state agencies, railroad companies, and private landowners to develop trail connections from the park to nearby communities and other visitor attractions, such as Hawks Nest State Park, Babcock State Park, the Gauley River National Recreation Area, Ansted, Oak Hill, Mount Hope, Beckley, and Meadow Bridge (see Figures 2.4, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.10).

The primary goal of the NPS in these efforts will be to assist with development of a seamless network of regional parks, open spaces, trails, and heritage sites within southern West Virginia that would increase protection and enhancement of biodiversity and create a greater array of educational and appropriate recreational opportunities. Other goals of the NPS would be to generally promote sustainable and informed tourism that incorporates socioeconomic and ecological concerns and to encourage and showcase environmental leadership by the NPS and the tourism industry.

#### ■ Other Partnerships (Alternatives 2 to 5)

**Hawks Nest and Babcock State Parks.** In the future the NPS would expand its collaboration with Hawks Nest State Park and Babcock State Park. Collaboration would focus on:

- developing shared strategies for dealing with common resource management issues (e.g., invasive species control, wildfire management, water quality management, etc.)

- providing official trail connections between park units
- providing complementary visitor experiences and interpretive programs
- making information about all parks in the region available to visitors
- avoiding redundancy in visitor services and facilities

**State and County Agencies.** The NPS would expand its collaboration with state and county resource management and regulatory agencies. Collaboration would focus on resource management programs, such as those pertaining to water quality management, wildlife management, air quality management, and cultural resource management. Collaboration would also focus on making state resource management programs and assistance available to owners of private land in the park. It would also focus on local enforcement of state and county environmental regulations. Of particular concern to the NPS would be collaboration focused on county enforcement of public health regulations pertaining to design and maintenance of on-site wastewater water disposal systems within the park as well as within the upstream watersheds of tributaries flowing into the New River within the park. Other concerns would be implementation of management and regulatory programs related to erosion and sedimentation control, stormwater management, timber harvesting, abandoned mine land reclamation, protection of cultural resources, protection of rare and endangered species habitat, and hunting.

**Non-Profit and Private Partners for Special Projects.** Collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners would expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences. Opportunities exist associated with restoration/rehabilitation of cultural resources where there is a potential for commercial adaptive reuse that would generate funds to support long-term sustainability of resources. For example, partnerships could assist the NPS with accomplishing desired conditions at Camp Brookside, Thurmond, Prince Brothers General Store, and early settlement/agricultural sites in the New River Parkway corridor (now River Road corridor).

**Organized Stakeholder Groups.** In the future the NPS would expand its collaboration with organized park stakeholder groups – particularly those that are representative of major park visitor groups and that have expertise and resources to assist the NPS with providing appropriate visitor facilities, with protecting resources from adverse visitor use impacts, and with enhancing visitor safety. These would include but not be limited to the West Virginia Professional River Outfitters (WVPRO), the West Virginia Wildwater Association, the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), and members of the local professional rock climbing community.



**2.4.9 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Alternatives 2 to 5)**

Table 2.12 identifies the desired resource conditions and desired visitor experiences for specific areas of the park that are common to Alternatives 2 to 5. The area-specific desired conditions focus on fundamental and other important resources and values and the visitor experience opportunities associated with them that would be appropriate in particular locations based on proposed management zoning..

Table 2.12 identifies the general types of actions in specific areas of the park that would be needed and allowable to achieve desired conditions common to Alternatives 2 to 5. These are examples of the actions needed to move from existing conditions to desired conditions. Identifying the types of needed and allowable changes helps 1) to provide a sense of what management actions might occur and what development might look like, 2) to identify the impacts of these actions, and 3) to estimate the general costs of implementing the action.

Table 2.12 Alternatives 2 to 5 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Development Areas</b>			
<b>Grandview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day-use facilities (picnicking facilities, recreational facilities, playground, trails, overlooks, restrooms) (high use – demand for picnic shelters exceeds capacity)</li> <li>amphitheatre (used for Theatre West Virginia productions) (needs rehabilitation)</li> <li>visitor contact station (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>main overlook not ADA accessible</li> <li>road system and parking (pedestrian and vehicular circulation issues occur during peak visitation periods)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facilities</li> <li>NPS operations facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make improvements to address existing pedestrian and vehicular issues, possibly including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relocate visitor contact station</li> <li>redesign and upgrade trail to main overlook (including making the trail ADA accessible)</li> <li>redesign main visitor parking lot</li> <li>install vehicular directional signage</li> <li>add a bus drop-off lane at Cliffside Amphitheatre</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Cunard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>crowded conditions during most summer weekends, especially when river levels are low</li> <li>inadequate private paddler parking</li> <li>inadequate boat slide capacity</li> <li>limited river access for disabled boaters</li> <li>visitor conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acquire property adjacent to the existing Cunard River Access and provide an additional boat launch facility</li> <li>provide additional private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road</li> <li>provide facilities for disabled boaters to access the river at Cunard</li> <li>block ATV access to Cunard via the New River railroad bridge</li> </ul>
<b>Fayette Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (parking, picnicking, public restrooms)</li> <li>CSX Main Line (active)</li> <li>visitors (primarily private paddlers) frequently illegally cross the CSX Main Line to reach the river access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>visitors use a variety of travel modes to access the park and specific visitor use sites</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>during periods of high visitor use provide a concession-based shuttle from satellite parking areas to the river access site</li> <li>rehabilitate the existing parking area above CSX right-of-way</li> </ul>
<b>Burnwood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental education based at picnic pavilions (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>Laing Loop Nature Trail</li> <li>park operations facilities (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facility (serving Burnwood and the Canyon Rim Visitor Center) (excess capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expand the existing Laing Loop Nature Trail</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor Areas</b>			
<b>Hinton to Meadow Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New River fishing (high use)</li> <li>Akers river access and day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>Tug Creek river access (low use)</li> <li>Brooks Falls river access, day-use facilities, undesignated camping (in floodplain) (poor condition) (high use)</li> <li>Hellem's Beach river access, day-use facilities, and campground (campsites in floodplain – use over capacity during peak visitation periods) (high use)</li> <li>Sandstone Falls river take-out (moderate use)</li> <li>Meadow Creek private river access (low use)</li> <li>future WV DOH-funded reconstruction of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the New River</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Hellem's Beach, remove the existing campsites and restore site</li> </ul>

Table 2.12 Alternatives 2 to 5 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	River Road as New River Parkway, including a bridge across the New River ▪ CSX Main Line on river right (active)		
<b>Army Camp to Stone Cliff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (low use)</li> <li>day-use area and campground (undesignated sites) (demand frequently exceeds capacity)(no public restrooms)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross CSX Main Line to reach Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, and Todd Beach (for camping)</li> <li>river rest stop at Dowdy Creek where paddlers frequently illegally cross under CSX Main Line to reach Dowdy Falls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way at Dowdy Creek, Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, and Todd Beach</li> </ul>
<b>Stone Cliff to Arbuckle Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stone Cliff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>campground and day-use area (in floodplain) (high use)</li> <li>Stone Cliff Trail and trailhead (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the New River</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Stone Cliff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>close the existing campground and restore riparian habitat</li> <li>provide a campground on the bench level</li> <li>provide a picnic area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Brooklyn to Hawks Nest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undesignated camping (moderate use)</li> <li>river fishing (no day-use facilities) (moderate use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Teays Landing river access (private)</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right upstream of Cunard and on river right and river left downstream of Cunard (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Main Line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to reach the lower railroad area (for fishing and boating)</li> <li>to reach Short Creek (for camping and fishing)</li> <li>to reach Kaymoor via the tunnel under the tracks (for hiking)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way in the lower railroad area, at Short Creek, and at Kaymoor</li> <li>work cooperatively with the WV DOT to provide tours of the New River Bridge using the bridge's maintenance catwalk</li> </ul>
<b>Forest Areas</b>			
<b>Rush Run</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn Mine Trail (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>Cunard Access Road</li> <li>Cunard Trailhead parking area</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rare animals are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limit visitor use to day use only</li> </ul>
<b>Sewell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area (plateau above Fire Creek, Ephraim Creek, Mann Creek, and Keeney Creek)</li> <li>no NPS facilities</li> <li>partially included within Babcock State Park (facilities include trails)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek and Mann Creek by WV DNR (moderate use)</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare pine communities occur on cliffs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rare animals are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limit visitor use to day use only</li> </ul>
<b>Beauty Mountain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beauty Mountain climbing area</li> <li>Beauty Mountain overlook (no designated trail)</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rare animals are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limit visitor use to day use only</li> </ul>

**Table 2.12 Alternatives 2 to 5 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes**

<b>Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area</b> (upstream to downstream)	<b>Existing Conditions and Facilities</b>	<b>Desired Conditions</b>	<b>Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions</b>
<b>Endless Wall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>Ambassador Buttress climbing area (low use)</li> <li>Diamond Foot/Cirque climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Endless Wall climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Endless Wall Trail and Nuttall Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Fern Creek Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>proliferation of undesignated trails accessing Ambassador Buttress and at the base of the Endless Wall</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare pine communities occur on cliffs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rare animals are protected</li> <li>cliff communities are maintained and sustain populations of rare and significant species</li> <li>rimrock pine communities are maintained</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limit visitor use to day use only</li> <li>prohibit bike use</li> <li>designate a trail at the base of Endless Wall</li> <li>provide a trail to Ambassador Buttress (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Sunshine Buttress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>New River Bridge Trail (low use)</li> <li>Sunshine Buttress climbing area (low use)</li> <li>no designated trails to climbing routes at the top or base of Sunshine Buttress</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rare animals are protected</li> <li>cliff communities are maintained and sustain populations of rare and significant species</li> <li>rimrock pine communities are maintained</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limit visitor use to day use only</li> <li>designate a trail at the base of Sunshine Buttress</li> <li>provide a trail to Sunshine Buttress (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Ames</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>Bridge Buttress climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Bridge Buttress parking area</li> <li>Bubba City climbing area (mod use)</li> <li>Junkyard climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>no designated trails to climbing routes at Bubba City or Junkyard</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rare animals are protected</li> <li>cliff communities are maintained and sustain populations of rare and significant species</li> <li>rimrock pine communities are maintained</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limit visitor use to day use only</li> <li>provide a trail to the Junkyard climbing area (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>designate a trail at the base of the Bubba City climbing area</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Alternative 2 – Themed Gorge Segments

### 2.5.1 Overall Management Concept (Alternative 2)

Alternative 2 emphasizes the substantial differences among subareas of the gorge, improving them to reflect their differing character, resources, and visitor experiences (see Figure 2.4).<sup>1</sup> Management actions would build upon the cultural resources, interpretive potential, and significant recreational opportunities of the north and south ends of the park, while retaining a primitive and remote feeling in the middle of the park.

### 2.5.2 Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation (Alternative 2)

#### ■ Experiencing the Park (Alternative 2)

Alternative 2 would emphasize opportunities for different visitor experiences in three areas of the park (see Figure 2.4):

- the **Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area** in the south where significant cultural resources would tell the stories of early settlement and farming in the Appalachians
- the **Primitive Outdoor Experience Area** in the middle of the park where the expanse of backcountry forest would remain wild and largely unfragmented
- the **Industrial Gorge Themed Area** in the north where significant cultural resources would tell the stories of America's industrialization related to coal mining, lumbering, and railroading in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

Table 2.13 provides an overview of potential visitor experiences in the three themed areas. Table 2.13 also summarizes management actions in Alternative 2 that would define where and how visitors would enjoy the important experiences that they may have at New River Gorge National River, including:

- appreciating life in the gorge – the human history story
- appreciating/experiencing the wildness of the landscape
- experiencing the power of the river
- experiencing scenic beauty

In Alternative 2 visitors would also continue to enjoy the classic park experiences at Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Thurmond, Endless Wall, Canyon Rim, and Fayette Station Road; new management actions consistent with the overall management concept for Alternative 2 would enhance the visitor experience at Sandstone Falls in the south and at Thurmond in the north.

<sup>1</sup> See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 above for a general comparison of the alternative concepts and a summary of the broad organizing principles for each alternative

**Table 2.13 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 2)**

<b>Places Where Visitors Would Generally Experience the Park</b>	
<b>Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area</b>	The Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area would encompass the southern end of the park from Hinton to Meadow Creek. Visitors would learn about early settlement and farming history at several representative restored farmhouses in the New River Parkway corridor. From New River Parkway and from improved recreation sites along the parkway and at Sandstone Falls, visitors would have opportunities to view the river, learn about the park's natural resources, and picnic. New hiking and biking trails would enable visitors to explore the park's forest and to visit the restored farmsteads on foot or by bicycle. Opportunities for camping would be available at a new developed campground.
<b>Primitive Outdoor Experience Area</b>	The Primitive Outdoor Experience Area would encompass the middle of the park from Meadow Creek to Thurmond. Visitors would have a backcountry experience where they would be immersed in nature, away from modern conveniences. Opportunities would be present to experience a sense of wildness, solitude, adventure, exploration, and discovery. Recreation would be unstructured and trail-based. Addition of a new river access at Meadow Creek West would enhance the river experience by offering new float trip options for families, fishermen, and beginning paddlers.
<b>Industrial Gorge Themed Area</b>	The Industrial Gorge Themed Area would encompass the northern end of the park from Thurmond to Hawks Nest State Park. Visitors would learn about the gorge's industrial history related to mining, lumbering, and railroading. An expanded network of trails would enhance access to cultural resource sites in remote forested areas.
<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 2)</i>	
<b>Appreciate life in the gorge – the human history story</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park there are cultural resource sites where human history stories could be told.</b></p> <p><u>In the Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area, visitors would learn about early Appalachian settlement by visiting historic farms where interpretive programs and exhibits would be available. The farmhouses would be restored to period condition and set within restored cultural landscapes.</u></p> <p><u>In the Industrial Gorge Themed Area visitors would learn about the park's industrial history related to mining, railroading, and lumbering:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>rehabilitated, restored, and stabilized commercial and residential structures at Thurmond would enable visitors to learn about life in the gorge's historic railroading towns (see Classic Experiences above)</u></li> <li>- stabilized mining structures and town ruins at Nuttallburg Mining Complex and the Nuttallburg town site would tell stories about life in the gorge's historic coal mining towns (as in Alternative 1)</li> <li>- <u>new trails would provide visitors with access to mining resource areas where they would learn about the park's mining history</u></li> <li>- visitors would also learn about the history of life in the gorge when they come upon and find cultural resource discovery sites <u>along trails (approximately 10 sites)</u></li> </ul>
<b>Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape</b>	<p><b>A sense of wildness dominates the landscape setting in most areas of the park.</b></p> <p><u>The Primitive Outdoor Experience Area composing most of the middle of the park would be managed as backcountry forest, preserving its wild character and enhancing the perception of the park's wildness as visitors experience the park. Overall, backcountry forest blocks would compose approximately 68.5 percent of the park.</u></p> <p>While paddling the river visitors would be transported to remote and wild areas in the upper, middle, and lower gorge, relying on the existing network of river accesses which make possible a variety of paddling experiences in a wild landscape setting.</p> <p>Visitors venturing into the park's forest would explore the park making their way along <u>an expanded network of trails</u> at times near the water's edge and at times looking into the gorge. <u>New trails would provide access to cultural resources, including industrial and</u></p>

**Table 2.13 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 2)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 2)</i>	
<b>Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape (continued)</b>	<p><u>mining town ruins in the Industrial Gorge Themed Area and to restored farmsteads in the Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area.</u> Exploration of the park by bicycle – pending adoption of a special regulation and subject to a development of a trail management plan – would occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones and would occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones.</p> <p>Visitors camping in the forest would experience nature and the sense of solitude that comes from spending extended time in the outdoors at existing campsites <u>and on the plateau in the Industrial Gorge.</u></p> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls expansive vistas of rugged terrain, dense forest, and the turbulent river in the gorge below would evoke appreciation of the wild landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evoking a sense of wildness would be added along existing and new trails that in the Industrial Gorge Themed Area and in the Early Settlement and Farming Area Themed Area.</u></p>
<b>Experience the power of the river</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park the power of the river is evident wherever visitors can be on the river, be at the river's edge, or view the river from afar.</b></p> <p>The New River would carry paddlers along its freeflowing course through the gorge cut by its waters deep in the Appalachian Plateau. Those who ride the river as it descends through the gorge would feel its power and experience the thrill of adventure and discovery as the water flows turbulently over and amidst massive boulders transported through time from the cliff walls above. River experiences would be available from the existing network of river accesses for paddlers. <u>Improvements to river accesses in upper gorge in the Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area would enable visitors to more safely and easily access the New River above Sandstone Falls.</u></p> <p>At the river's edge visitors could see, smell, and hear the river, feeling its power as they sense around them the scale of the gorge shaped by the flowing water. From the existing network of river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge visitors would experience the river as it flows calmly yet powerfully on its course northward; elsewhere visitors would experience a wild river flowing turbulently around rocks and boulders. In the Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area the river's edge experience would be enhanced by day-use area improvements included in the New River Parkway project (as in Alternative 1) <u>as well as enhancements at other river accesses and day use areas. In the Lower Gorge Themed Area the visitor experience at the river at Dun Glen would be enhanced by restoration and expansion of existing day-use facilities.</u></p> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls the depth of the gorge, the exposed cliff walls, and the massive boulders in the river below, would evidence the river's power to shape the landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evidencing the river's power to shape the landscape would be added along existing and new trails in the Industrial Gorge Themed Area and in the Early Settlement and Farming Area Themed Area.</u></p>
<b>Experience scenic beauty</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park its scenic beauty is evident from roads, trails, overlooks, and the river.</b></p> <p>From existing roads visitors would have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. In the south end of the park as visitors travel New River Parkway from Sandstone to Hinton the scenic beauty of the park would be evident in the dramatic landscape visible from the New River Bridge and along the parkway (as in Alternative 1). In the north end of the park, efforts would be made to enhance opportunities for scenic vistas along Fayette Station Road by working with WV DOH to add pull-outs (as in Alternative 1).</p> <p>Visitors traveling on existing trails would continue to have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. <u>Visitors would also enjoy the park's scenic resources from new trails providing access to cultural resources in the Industrial Gorge Themed Area and to restored farmsteads in the Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area.</u></p>

**Table 2.13 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 2)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included Alternative 2)</i>	
<b>Experience scenic beauty (continued)</b>	Visitors would continue to have panoramic scenic views of the park's landscape from existing developed overlooks and from a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for panoramic scenic views would be added along existing and new trails that in the Industrial Gorge Themed Area and in the Early Settlement and Farming Area Themed Area.</u>
<b>Classic Park Experiences</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included Alternative 2)</i>	
<b>Paddling the New River</b>	Paddlers would continue to experience the power of the river and the park's wild character and natural beauty as they float the river, stopping to picnic, fish, visit natural and cultural sites of interest, and/or camp. Opportunities for disabled paddlers would be enhanced by addition of disabled boater access at the Cunard and McCreery (Terry Beach) river accesses (in Alternatives 2 to 5). The condition of river recreation sites popular for river lunch stops, camping, and fishing would be enhanced by improving access and providing restroom facilities where practicable (in Alternatives 2 to 5). More frequent river patrols would provide visitor education and, as needed, increased enforcement of existing regulations related to group size, trash removal, and human waste removal where restrooms are not available (in Alternatives 2 to 5).
<b>Sandstone Falls</b>	The boardwalk and recreational facilities at Sandstone would continue to bring visitors to the water's edge where they can feel the power of the river, experience its beauty, and learn about the park's significant natural resources (as in Alternative 1). <u>The visitor experience would be enhanced by expansion of the boardwalk and parking facilities, addition of interpretive media, and replacement of restroom facilities.</u>
<b>Sandstone Falls Visitor Center</b>	At the Sandstone Falls Visitor Center visitors would continue to be oriented to the park <u>with an emphasis on different experiences in three parts of the park</u> (see Section 2.5.2 above).
<b>Grandview</b>	Social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities at Grandview would continue in a setting where visitors can experience the scenic beauty of the park, the wildness of its landscape, and the power of the river (as in Alternative 1). Park visitors would enjoy safer access to the Turkey Spur overlook (as in Alternative 1). Theatre goers would continue to enjoy productions at an updated Cliffside Amphitheatre (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Thurmond</b>	Thurmond would become a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where the railroading story would be told. Contamination at Commercial Row structures would be remediated (as in Alternative 1) <u>and the buildings rehabilitated so that commercial activities can return to the town (through the park's leasing program).</u> <u>At restored historic houses the stories of town life would be told. The town would also be home to some NPS staff that would live in rehabilitated historic houses. Visitors might also be able to stay in the town in lodging made available in rehabilitated historic houses. Historic buildings that are not rehabilitated would be stabilized and restored on the exterior only.</u>
<b>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg</b>	<u>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg would be highlighted as places in the north end of the park where the park's industrial story would be told.</u> Trails would provide visitor access to historic mining areas at Kaymoor and Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1). Nationally significant mining resources at Nuttallburg would be interpreted for visitors and made more accessible through parking and trail improvements (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Experiencing the Cliffs</b>	The massive sandstone cliffs in the Endless Wall area and elsewhere would continue to attract visitors seeking to experience their beauty as well as the thrill of adventure, exploration, and solitude of rock climbing (as in Alternative 1). Access to the Endless Wall would be made easier and safer by adding parking and by establishing designated and maintained trails to climbing routes (in Alternatives 2 to 5). Climbing and other visitor activities in the Endless Wall area would also be limited to day use (in Alternatives 2 to 5).
<b>Canyon Rim</b>	At Canyon Rim visitors would continue to be oriented to the park at the visitor center <u>with an emphasis on different experiences in three parts of the park</u> (see Section 2.5.2 above). Visitors would continue to have opportunities to view the river and the gorge from existing overlooks (as in Alternative 1).



**Table 2.13 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 2)****Classic Park Experiences (continued)** (*underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 2*)

<b>Fayette Station Road</b>	Fayette Station Road would continue to be a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where visitors would experience the historic travel route across the river, learn about the park's industrial heritage, view the river, and feel its power (as in Alternative 1). Improvements to Fayette Station Road and parking facilities, as well as implementation of shuttle service during periods of high visitor use, would make for a safer visitor experience with more opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources and with fewer opportunities for visitor conflicts (in Alternatives 2 to 5).
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### ■ Visitor Orientation

Visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Sandstone would continue to as primary venues where visitor orientation would occur. From these locations visitors interested in park history would be directed to the New River Parkway corridor (existing River Road corridor) in the south end of the park and to the major industrial sites – Fayette Station, Nuttallburg, Kaymoor, and Thurmond – in the north end of the park. More adventurous visitors would be directed to trailheads from which to access cultural resources in remote areas of the frontcountry and the backcountry in these two areas. Visitor orientation would also emphasize the variety of recreation opportunities for exploration, adventure, and solitude available throughout the park on the river and within the preserved backcountry forest in the middle gorge.

New park brochures and informational materials would describe the park's resources and opportunities in the three areas of the gorge – the historic areas in the south and north and the primitive area in the middle. Working collaboratively with WV DOH, the park would seek to place signage along public roads directing visitors to park attractions in the upper gorge and the lower gorge as they leave visitor centers and as they approach the park from US 19, US 60, I-64, and WV SR 41.

### 2.5.3 Resource Management (Alternative 2)

#### ■ Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems (Alternative 2)

**Resource Stewardship Strategies.** The management strategies shown in Table 2.12 are the actions that the NPS would implement to achieve and maintain over time desired natural resource conditions. The strategies address the management issues challenging the park relevant to maintaining natural processes and restoring natural systems. Implementation of these strategies would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5.

**Unfragmented Forest.** In Alternative 2 blocks of intact and unfragmented forest in the middle of the park would be managed as backcountry forest. Backcountry forest would include the ten forest blocks zoned backcountry in Alternatives 2 to 5, as well as six additional blocks in the middle of the park (see Table 2.15 and Figure

**Table 2.14**

New River Gorge National River  
**Alternative 2 – Management  
 Zoning Summary**

<b>Management Zone</b>	<b>Area (acres)</b>
Backcountry	49,029 (68.5%)
Frontcountry	15,950 (22.3%)
River Corridor	5,525 (7.7%)
Historic Resource	599 (0.9%)
Park Development	443 (0.6%)

**Table 2.15**

New River Gorge National River  
**Backcountry Forest  
 Management Zoning in  
 Alternative 2** (see Figure 2.5)

#### **Backcountry Zones Common to Alternatives 2 to 5**

- Fall Branch
- Meadow Creek North
- Glade Creek
- Garden Ground
- Stretcher Neck
- Claremont
- Above Thurmond
- Rush Run
- Sewell
- Endless Wall

#### **Additional Areas Zoned Backcountry in Alternative 2**

- Terry-Batoff Creek
- Dunloup Creek
- Bucklick Branch
- Highland-Backus
- Dowdy Creek
- Substation

2.5). Backcountry forest zoning would extend from I-64 on river left (Meadow Creek on river right) to Cunard. It would also apply to the Fall Branch area (adjacent to River Road – the future New River Parkway) and to the Endless Wall area (as in all the action alternatives). The backcountry zones would be managed to protect and restore unfragmented forest blocks largely free of human disturbance and to offer opportunities for visitors to be immersed in nature, relying on non-motorized access.

In Alternative 2 frontcountry forest zoning would apply to most of the north and south ends of the park, as well as to the Babcock State Park, the Arbuckle Creek, and the Below Thurmond areas (see Figure 2.5). Within these areas large contiguous forest blocks would generally be maintained, although some development for visitor use facilities might occur that would cause some forest fragmentation. Visitors would access the frontcountry forest in the north and south ends of the park by roads and by trails.

**Riparian Corridor.** No additional areas would be managed as riparian zones in Alternative 2 beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

#### ■ **Water Quality Management (Alternative 2)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 related to water quality management beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

#### ■ **Cultural Resource Management (Alternative 2)**

In Alternative 2 cultural resource management actions would focus on treatment and interpretation of:

- representative early settlement/agricultural resources in the south end of the park
- representative industrial resources and discovery sites in the north end of the park
- representative discovery sites along trails in the middle of the park (approximately 10 sites)

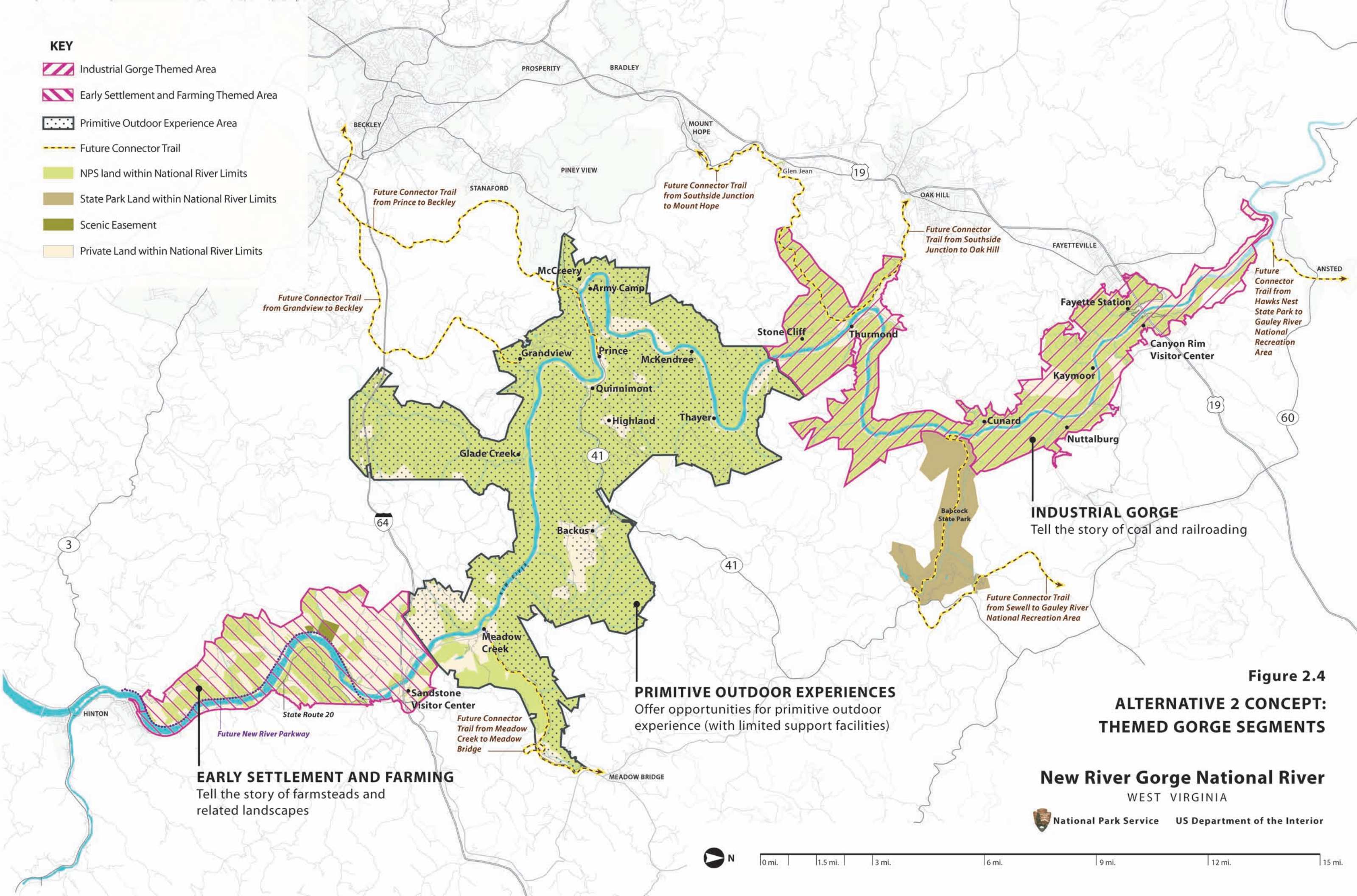
**Early Settlement/Agricultural Resources.** Cultural resources in the southern end of the park would generally be managed to tell the park's early settlement/agricultural stories. The following actions would be implemented:

- representative farmhouses and outbuildings would be restored
- the cultural landscapes associated with restored farmhouses (including farm fields, fence lines, and orchards) would be restored
- interpretative media would be installed



KEY

- Industrial Gorge Themed Area
- Early Settlement and Farming Themed Area
- Primitive Outdoor Experience Area
- Future Connector Trail
- NPS land within National River Limits
- State Park Land within National River Limits
- Scenic Easement
- Private Land within National River Limits



**EARLY SETTLEMENT AND FARMING**  
Tell the story of farmsteads and related landscapes

**PRIMITIVE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES**  
Offer opportunities for primitive outdoor experience (with limited support facilities)

**INDUSTRIAL GORGE**  
Tell the story of coal and railroading

**Figure 2.4**  
**ALTERNATIVE 2 CONCEPT:**  
**THEMED GORGE SEGMENTS**





- restored farm fields (exclusive of those at Phillips Farm) would be leased for agriculture

Also in the southern end of the park, at Camp Brookside the NPS would work in partnership with an educational institution to rehabilitate camp buildings for adaptive reuse for education purposes.

**Industrial Resources.** Industrial resources in the northern end of the park would be treated and interpreted to tell the park's mining, lumbering, and railroading stories. Many of these sites would only be accessible by foot on existing or new park trails.

At Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), a variety of management actions would be implemented to treat resources, to tell the story of mining in the gorge, and to provide safe visitor access facilities.

At Thurmond, a variety of management actions would be implemented to treat resources, to provide a focal point for telling the story of railroading in the gorge, and to provide safe visitor access. As in Alternative 1, contamination would be remediated in the Commercial Row buildings. In Alternative 2 the buildings would also be rehabilitated and leased through the NPS historic leasing program. Representative historic houses would be restored to period condition for a period exhibit. Other viable historic houses would also be rehabilitated for reuse as park housing or visitor lodging through the NPS historic leasing program. Remaining historic structures would be stabilized (maintaining exteriors only). Partners would be sought to assist with rehabilitation.

A few additional industrial sites in the northern end of the park would be managed as discovery sites (see Section 2.4.5 Cultural Resource Management above) located along new or existing park trails. Representative coal mining discovery sites could include: Fayette Mine, Caperton, Sewell, Pennbrook, Fire Creek, Beury, the Brooklyn Coke Ovens, Stone Cliff Mine, and the Stone Cliff coke ovens.

**Discovery Sites in the Middle of the Park.** Where cultural resources in the middle of the park are accessible from roads or adjoin visitor use areas or trails, some would be managed as discovery sites. A few representative railroading-related discovery sites could include Prince Brothers General Store, the Prince Train Station, Quinnimont Church, former town sites at Hamlet and McCreery, and Harrah Homestead. At Harrah Homestead treatment actions would also include rehabilitation of the cultural landscape.

#### ■ **Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge (Alternative 2)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 to protect scenic resources in and around the gorge beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources in the north and south ends of the park along several new trails (see Section 2.5.4 below). In the south, a new farm loop trail would provide scenic views of the upper river gorge, the pastoral landscape, and cultural landscapes at the park's early settlement farms. In the north, new trails to industrial sites would provide scenic views of the lower gorge and cultural landscapes illustrative of the park's industrial heritage.

#### **2.5.4 Visitor Use and Visitor Facilities (Alternative 2)**

##### **■ Hiking and Equestrian Use (Alternative 2)**

In addition to the trail system expansion common to Alternatives 2 to 5 and the trail improvements at Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), Alternative 2 would make available new trails providing access to cultural resources, including industrial and mining town ruins in the north and early settlement/agricultural resources in the south. All new trails would generally use existing unmaintained trails. Possible new trails would include:

- a trail to Fayette Mine
- a trail to Stone Cliff Mine
- a trail from the Stone Cliff Coke Ovens to Stone Cliff Mine
- a rail trail from Thurmond to Sewell
- a farm loop trail connecting Richmond-Hamilton Farm, Vallandingham Farm, Trump-Lilly Farm, and Phillips Farm

Alternative 2 would address the need for additional equestrian trails by providing a new equestrian loop trail in the Craig Branch area. The boardwalks at Sandstone Falls would also be expanded.

Trailhead facilities would be provided for all new trails.

##### **■ Biking (Alternative 2)**

Alternative 2 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails listed in the preceding section subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 2 a possible new trail with biking access would be developed parallel to the CSX Main Line from Thurmond to Sewell.

##### **■ Hunting (Alternative 2) (Continuation of Existing Hunting Program)**

In Alternative 2 hunting within the park would continue in accordance with the hunting and fishing regulations of the WV DNR (as in Alternatives 1 and 3). Hunting would generally be permitted throughout the park. A few areas would remain closed to hunting for safety reasons, including

- areas designated as safety zones in the park compendium (NPS 2007)
- areas within the historic boundaries of Grandview State Park and Sandstone Falls State Park
- the area within the boundary of Babcock State Park (which is managed by the state of West Virginia)

■ **Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way (Alternative 2)**

In Alternative 2 the NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible. As in Alternative 1 priorities would be to secure legal crossings at locations where visitors currently frequently cross tracks illegally.

■ **Access and Parking (Alternative 2)**

In Alternative 2 management actions would generally maintain existing patterns of motorized access within the park, while permitting expansion of motorized access for visitors and/or administrative use in park development zones, historic resource zones, river corridor zones, and frontcountry zones. Approximately two-thirds (68.5%) of the park would be zoned backcountry where roads and parking would be limited to zone perimeters (see Figure 2.5) and where only non-motorized access could occur in the zone interior.

In Alternative 2 in the south end of the park visitor access and parking facilities would be provided at Trump-Lilly Farm and the existing parking area at Sandstone Falls would be expanded. In the north end of the park new trails that provide access to industrial and mining town ruins would have trailheads with adequate parking for visitors.

At Cunard existing problems with inadequate parking for private paddlers on peak visitation days would be alleviated by:

- adding parking for private paddlers at Cunard (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)

■ **Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access) (Alternative 2)**

Additional visitor facilities that would be developed as part of Alternative 2 would include camping, picnicking, and river access facilities – primarily in the north and south ends of the park. All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities (common to Alternatives 2 to 5).

In the south end of the park, new visitor facilities or improvements to visitor facilities would occur at Brooks Falls, Sandstone Falls, and at Camp Brookside:

- at Brooks Falls existing facilities would be improved, including enhancements to river access facilities, installation of comfort stations, and expansion of picnic facilities
- at Sandstone Falls a new comfort station would be added
- at Camp Brookside the NPS would work in partnership with an educational institution to rehabilitate camp buildings for adaptive reuse for education purposes

In the north end of the park a new developed campground would be developed at the existing NPS Burnwood day-use/operations area. This campground would address the need for camping facilities in proximity to rock climbing areas and cultural resource attractions in the lower gorge.

In the middle of the park day-use facilities at Dun Glen would be rehabilitated.

River access improvements associated with Alternative 2 would include:

- at Cunard expansion of existing parking for private paddlers and addition of new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- enhancements to the Brooks Falls river access (see preceding section on Access and Parking)

#### **2.5.5 Working with Local Communities (Alternative 2)**

##### **■ Sustaining Communities within the Park (Alternative 2)**

**Hinton.** No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 to strengthen the connection between the city, its residents, and the mission of the NPS at the park beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7 above).

**Thurmond.** Thurmond would become a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where the railroading story would be told (see Table 2.13). Visitation levels would dramatically increase. Visitor lodging would also likely be made available in restored houses. Visitors would be more likely to explore areas of the town where private residents live. The permanent residential population would increase as a result of NPS staff living in some restored houses. The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with residents – including NPS staff residents – to address issues associated with living in the historic town.

**Other Communities within the Park.** Collaborative priorities for the other communities within the park in Alternative 2 are summarized in Table 2.16 below. The collaboration actions referenced in Table 2.16 are described above in the discussion of actions common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7).



**Table 2.16 Alternative 2 – Collaborative Priorities for Communities within the Park\***

		Collaborative Actions by the NPS and Local Communities within the Park									
Community	Alternative 2 Setting	Collaboration Priority	Form Community Partner Group	Provide Technical Assistance to Communities for							
				Developing a Community Vision Plan	Managing Change	Managing Visitor Impacts	Documenting Resources	Obtaining Grants	Managing Invasive Species	Providing Private Sector Visitor Services	Develop NPS Facilities, as Needed
Hinton	a major gateway community partly within the park at its southern end; no major existing or new visitor use facilities	1	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
Meadow Creek	a community at the edge of the primitive outdoor experience area in the middle of the park (minimum visitor through traffic); Sandstone Visitor Center	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prince/Quinnimont	a community surrounded by the primitive outdoor experience area in the middle of the park (visitor and public through traffic on WV SR 41); a few existing visitor facilities in vicinity	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terry	a community surrounded by the outdoor primitive experience area in the middle of the park; a few existing visitor facilities in vicinity	2	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Thayer	a remote community surrounded by the outdoor primitive experience area in the middle of the park; a few existing visitor facilities in vicinity	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Backus	on plateau surrounded by primitive outdoor experience area; no existing or new visitor facilities in vicinity	3	✓	✓			✓				
Highland	on plateau surrounded by primitive outdoor experience area; no existing or new visitor facilities in vicinity	3	✓	✓			✓				
Thurmond	a major attraction in the Industrial Gorge Themed Area; restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures would dramatically increase visitation and the number of residents living in the town	1				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 – High Priority    2 – Medium Priority    3 – Low Priority    ✓ - action recommended, as funding allows											

### 2.5.6 Land Protection (Alternative 2)

#### ■ Land Protection Priorities (Alternative 2)

In the future the NPS land protection program would focus efforts on the highest priority properties still to be protected in the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). For Alternative 2 the priorities for working with willing sellers of private property would be further refined to focus on acquiring properties that are important to accomplishing the overall concept for the alternative, such as properties that:

- include early settlement/agricultural cultural resources in the southern end of the park
- include industrial and mining town ruins in the northern end of the park
- include sites needed for trailheads, trail connections, or recreational sites in the middle of the park
- include a site for a developed campground on the plateau in the northern end of the park
- **Stewardship of Private Land Remaining within the Park Boundary (Alternative 2)**

In the future the NPS would work cooperatively with the owners of private lands remaining within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship of privately-owned resources and values that are fundamental to the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). In Alternative 2 NPS would further focus the stewardship program on the private lands that are of high priority for protection as noted in Section 2.4.8 above and in the preceding section (Land Protection Priorities).

#### **2.5.7 Partnerships (Alternative 2)**

##### **■ Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors (Alternative 2)**

In the future the NPS would take a number of actions aimed at strengthening the connection between the public and the mission of the NPS at New River Gorge National River (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 to enhance relevance of the park to local visitors beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

##### **■ Gateway Community Partnerships (Alternative 2)**

In the future the NPS would expand efforts to work cooperatively with its gateway communities to define and accomplish shared goals (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 to enhance partnerships with the park's gateway communities beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

##### **■ Regional Tourism Partnerships (Alternative 2)**

In the future the NPS would expand its participation in regional economic development planning efforts underway by the various regional planning agencies and organizations in southern West Virginia (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 related to NPS participation in these efforts beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

##### **■ Other Partnerships (Alternative 2)**

In the future the NPS would expand its collaboration with other public agencies and groups – including Babcock and Hawks Nest State Parks, state and county agencies, and organized stakeholder groups (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions

would be implemented in Alternative 2 related to NPS partnerships with these entities beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

### **2.5.8 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Alternative 2)**

Table 2.17 identifies the desired resource conditions and desired visitor experiences for specific areas of the park in Alternative 2. The area-specific desired conditions focus on fundamental and other important resources and values and the visitor experience opportunities associated with them that would be appropriate in particular locations based on proposed management zoning.

Table 2.17 also identifies the general types of actions in specific areas of the park that would be needed and allowable to achieve desired conditions in Alternative 2. These are examples of the actions needed to move from existing conditions to desired conditions. Identifying the types of needed and allowable changes helps 1) to provide a sense of what management actions might occur and what development might look like in Alternative 2, 2) to identify the impacts of these actions, and 3) to estimate the general costs of implementing the actions.

### **2.5.9 Costs (Alternative 2)**

The NPS has prepared estimates of annual operating costs and one-time costs associated with Alternative 2 using NPS and industry cost estimating guidelines (see Table 2.37 in Section 2.14 below). Annual recurring costs include personnel and non-labor costs, such as utilities, vehicles, travel, and supplies. One-time capital investments include construction, exhibits, research and planning. These costs are presented for comparative purposes only and will be refined at a later date based upon final design of facilities and other considerations. Some projects have the potential to be funded through partnerships and volunteers, or through shared funding with other agencies. Therefore, actual costs would vary depending on when specific actions are implemented and on contributions by partners and volunteers.

#### **■ NPS Annual Operating Costs and Staffing Requirements (Alternative 2)**

NPS annual operating costs associated with Alternative 2 are estimated to be \$15,570,000 (2009 dollars). This includes the anticipated cost for staff salaries and benefits for 186 full-time equivalent staff, utilities, supplies, leasing (including leased park offices, as in Alternative 2), and other materials needed for park maintenance and operations.

Operating costs for Alternative 2 include the addition of 26 new FTE. The new positions include one new FTE to help develop and manage partnerships with the gateway communities, additional protection rangers to cover new cultural and backcountry facilities, additional interpretive staff to help visitors understand the focal areas, and additional staff to maintain new park facilities.

■ **NPS One-Time Costs (Alternative 2)**

NPS one-time costs associated with Alternative 2 are estimated to be \$27,350,000 (2009 dollars) including one-time facilities costs and non-facilities costs.

Facility costs include projects such as the following:

- restore Richmond-Hamilton Farm for interpretation
- restore the Trump-Lilly and Vallandigham farmhouses for interpretation
- rehabilitate Camp Brookside for adaptive reuse for educational purposes
- rehabilitate two Thurmond Houses for temporary housing and 18 houses for interpretation
- rehabilitate Thurmond's Commercial Row for lease
- provide new trails for rock climber access
- provide two new equestrian trails
- add new hiking trails and trailheads to historic resources
- provide new improvements to Turkey Spur at Grandview
- improve Cunard and Fayette Station river access areas to relieve congestion
- relocate Stone Cliff campground from riparian area
- improve day use areas at Brooks Falls, Sandstone Falls, Dun Glen, McCreery and Mill Creek

Non-facility costs include projects such as the following:

- restore farm fields, fence lines and orchards on historic farms
- develop 15 cultural resources as discovery sites
- pedestrian access across CSX right-of-way at new campgrounds
- develop new scenic vistas
- install and maintain information kiosks at gateway communities

## 2.17 Alternative 2 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Development Areas</b>			
<b>Terry Beach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McCreery:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>demand exceeds capacity during peak visitation periods leading to safety issues and visitor conflicts</li> <li>private paddler safety issues due to pedestrian crossing of WV SR 41)</li> <li>NPS unable to acquire property needed to relocate parking and address safety issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>Terry Beach               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>private river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> <li>conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on peak visitation days, eliminate safety concerns at McCreery river access by prohibiting commercial use of the river access</li> <li>provide facilities for disabled boaters to access the river</li> </ul>
<b>Dun Glen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>Dun Glen               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day use facilities (picnicking, parking, restrooms)</li> <li>group campground (in floodplain)</li> <li>park operations facility (in remnants of Dun Glen Hotel) (block access to river – functionally obsolete)</li> <li>park housing (dorms) (functionally obsolete)</li> </ul> </li> <li>visitors illegally cross over CSX Corman Spur Line at Southside Junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>park staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, and partners work in a safe and secure environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>close the existing campground and restore the riparian habitat</li> <li>relocate existing park housing elsewhere in the park</li> <li>rehabilitate day-use facilities (restrooms, picnic shelter, parking, access road)</li> <li>as park operations buildings become functionally obsolete, consider relocating existing park operations functions to Burnwood and demolishing buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Fayette Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (parking, picnicking, public restrooms)</li> <li>CSX Main Line (active)</li> <li>visitors (primarily private paddlers) frequently illegally cross the CSX Main Line to reach the river access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) to Fayette Mine</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.14))</li> </ul>
<b>Burnwood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental education based at picnic pavilions (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>Laing Loop Nature Trail</li> <li>park operations facilities (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facility (serving Burnwood and the Canyon Rim Visitor Center) (excess capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground (with connection to existing Burnwood water and wastewater systems)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource Areas</b>			
<b>Richmond Bottom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richmond-Hamilton Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farmhouse (habitable condition), split-log barns (period condition), other outbuildings (period condition)</li> <li>fields not leased for agriculture</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>no interpretive programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Vallandigham Farm               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>log cabin (not habitable), log smokehouse, other outbuildings</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Richmond-Hamilton Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>restore the farmhouse and barns to period condition</li> <li>provide access and parking for visitors</li> <li>interpret the cultural landscape</li> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>at Vallandigham Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>restore the farmhouse to period condition</li> <li>provide access and parking for visitors</li> <li>interpret the cultural landscape</li> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>lease all restored farm fields for agricultural use</li> <li>provide trailhead facilities at farmstead destinations on the farm loop trail</li> </ul>

## 2.17 Alternative 2 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
		appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park	
<b>Trump-Lilly Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farm, outbuildings, farm fields, and orchard</li> <li>excellent example of post-bellum subsistence farmstead in uplands of the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register</li> <li>farmhouse not habitable</li> <li>approximately 10 percent of historic fields are presently open</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore the farmhouse and outbuildings to period condition</li> <li>restore farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>lease restored farm fields for agricultural use</li> <li>interpret the cultural landscape</li> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul>
<b>Camp Brookside</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>site retains original camp structures, generally in good condition</li> <li>landscape features are indicative of a typical recreational camp</li> <li>good example of post-World War II social welfare programs established by American companies</li> <li>potentially eligible for the National Register</li> <li>NPS ranger station and maintenance storage building</li> <li>no interpretive programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>cobble and flatrock communities persist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in partnership with an educational institution, rehabilitate buildings for adaptive reuse for environmental education purposes; potential uses include, but are not limited to, conference facilities, classrooms, and student overnight accommodations</li> </ul>
<b>Westfall Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>privately-owned; recently subdivided and some new homes constructed</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>Cochran Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outbuildings, cemetery, small pond (filling in)</li> <li>most of site is an open field with</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Cochran Farm               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>interpret the cultural landscape</li> <li>provide access and parking for visitors</li> </ul> </li> <li>rehabilitate farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>lease rehabilitated farm fields for agricultural use</li> </ul>
<b>Phillips Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>log cabin and log outbuilding (fairly intact)</li> <li>timber-frame outbuilding (badly deteriorated)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore the farmhouse and outbuildings to period condition</li> <li>restore farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>interpret the cultural landscape</li> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul>

## 2.17 Alternative 2 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Sandstone Falls Island</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>most visited site in upper gorge</li> <li>day-use facility with parking &amp; picnicking</li> <li>boardwalk and interpretive trail takes visitors through rare Appalachian flatrock community and provides vistas of Sandstone Falls</li> <li>river access below falls</li> <li>restrooms functionally obsolete</li> <li>lack of visitor control leads to riparian zone impacts</li> <li>parking inadequate during periods of high visitor use and other times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cobble and flatrock communities persist</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide additional parking</li> <li>expand boardwalk trails</li> <li>replace and expand restroom facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Harrah Homestead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame house, wood-frame outbuildings, log smokehouse (all in very poor condition)</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> </ul>
<b>Thurmond</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>town mostly owned by the NPS, although some houses remain in private ownership and are occupied year-round</li> <li>entire town site included within the Thurmond Historic District (listed on National Register)</li> <li>restored Thurmond Depot (used as NPS visitor center) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>Commercial Row (stabilized on exterior) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>remnants of C&amp;O train yard and passenger depot</li> <li>various frame houses (variable condition – some in poor condition, some recently stabilized on exterior only)</li> <li>kudzu negatively impacted site</li> <li>structures at Commercial row have lead and asbestos contamination</li> <li>inadequate water supply and wastewater treatment systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate commercial row buildings and lease them through the NPS historic leasing program</li> <li>restore representative historic houses to period condition for a period exhibit</li> <li>rehabilitate other viable historic houses for reuse for park housing, park dormitory housing, or visitor lodging through the NPS historic leasing program</li> <li>restore other remaining historic structures (maintaining the exteriors only)</li> <li>provide trailhead parking for the Thurmond to Sewell Trail</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor Areas</b>			
<b>Hinton to Meadow Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New River fishing (high use)</li> <li>Akers river access (low use)</li> <li>Tug Creek river access (low use)</li> <li>Brooks Falls river access, day-use facilities, undesignated camping (in floodplain) (poor condition) (high use)</li> <li>Hellems Beach river access, day-use facilities, and campground (campsites in floodplain – use over capacity during peak visitation periods) (high use)</li> <li>Sandstone Falls river take-out (moderate use)</li> <li>Meadow Cr private river access (low use)</li> <li>future WV DOH-funded reconstruction of River Road as New River Parkway, including a bridge across the New River and recreation site enhancements</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Brooks Falls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve existing river access facilities</li> <li>provide new restroom facilities</li> <li>expand picnicking facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.14))</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek to Quinnimont</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>Glade Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>Glade Creek campground and day-use area (high use) (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail high use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mill Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping in floodplain</li> <li>no restrooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>Walk-in camping at Grassy Shoals, Mill Creek, and Royal Pull-Out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Glade Creek: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide facilities for disabled boaters to access the river</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 2.17 Alternative 2 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>		
<b>Forest Areas</b>			
<b>Sewell Mountain</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul>
<b>Glade Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>popular hunting and fishing area (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR and Glade-Pinch Trout Association</li> <li>fish stocking in Mill Creek by WV DNR</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail provides fishing access and a connection from the rim to the river (admin vehicles permitted on upper section)</li> <li>Polls Plateau Trail, Kates Plateau Trail and Kates Falls Trail provide access for primitive camping and hunting</li> <li>Lower Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>Upper Glade Creek Trailhead (demand exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Cloverdale Road area used for access to Kates Plateau Trail although no trailhead facilities are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete studies to understand impacts of stocking on native trout fish stocking; continue to support stocking by WV DNR and park partners, if deemed appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Above Thurmond</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River near the river level</li> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail from the Stone Cliff coke ovens to Stone Cliff Mine</li> </ul>
<b>Below Thurmond</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a rail/trail from Thurmond to Sewell</li> <li>provide a trail to Stone Cliff Mine</li> </ul>
<b>Sewell</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area (plateau above Fire Creek, Ephraim Creek, Mann Creek, and Keeney Creek)</li> <li>no NPS facilities</li> <li>partially included within Babcock State Park (facilities include trails)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek and Mann Creek by WV DNR (moderate use)</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stabilize ruins at the Sewell town site</li> <li>provide a rail/trail from Thurmond to Sewell</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Craig Branch</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road “classic park experience” (high use)</li> <li>numerous park trails (high use)</li> <li>South Nuttall climbing area (low use)</li> <li>Kaymoor climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Butcher Branch climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Longmont Trailhead</li> <li>Bridge Trailhead</li> <li>Wolf Creek Trailhead (demand frequently exceeds capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide an equestrian loop trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Endless Wall</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway’s design capacity)</li> <li>Ambassador Buttress climbing area (low use)</li> <li>Diamond Foot/Cirque climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Endless Wall climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Endless Wall Trail and Nuttall Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Fern Creek Trail &amp; Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>proliferation of undesignated trails accessing Ambassador Buttress and at the base of the Endless Wall</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail to Fayette Mine</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>



## 2.6 Alternative 3 – Through Park Trail

### 2.6.1 Overall Management Concept (Alternative 3)

Alternative 3 would unify the park by providing a north-south through park hike and bike trail that enables visitors to travel the park on singletrack trails at or near the river (see Figure 2.6).<sup>1</sup> Existing scenic roads would be enhanced. New access and facilities in the middle of the park would balance opportunities for visitors throughout the park.

### 2.6.2 Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation (Alternative 3)

#### ■ Experiencing the Park (Alternative 3)

Alternative 3 would emphasize diverse opportunities for visitor experiences throughout the park (see Figure 2.6). A new through park trail would enable visitors to explore the park from end-to-end, providing expanded access to cultural resource sites, scenic vistas, and natural features. Opportunities for recreation, scenic resource, and interpretive experiences would be expanded in the middle of the park – where few visitor facilities now exist – by addition of new trails and camping facilities at the river level and on the plateau. In cooperation with the WV Division of Highways, improvements to the McKendree Road – along with its designation as a state scenic backway – would dramatically enhance access in the middle of the park making possible a variety of new visitor experiences, including those for visitors not physically able to explore the park by foot, bicycle, or boat. Throughout the park visitors would learn about the park’s history as they explore the park on an expanded trail network and come upon cultural resource “discovery sites” where interpretive media would tell the park’s stories.

Table 2.18 provides an overview of potential visitor experiences in various places in the park. Table 2.18 also summarizes management actions in Alternative 3 that would define where and how visitors would enjoy the important experiences that they may have at New River Gorge National River, including:

- appreciating life in the gorge – the human history story
- appreciating/experiencing the wildness of the landscape
- experiencing the power of the river
- experiencing scenic beauty

Visitors would also continue to enjoy the classic New River Gorge experiences at Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Thurmond, Endless Wall, Canyon Rim, and Fayette Station Road; new management actions consistent with the overall concept for Alternative 3 would enhance the visitor experience only at Thurmond.

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<sup>1</sup> See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 above for a general comparison of the alternative concepts and a summary of the broad organizing principles for each alternative

## 2.18 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 3)

### Places Where Visitors Would Generally Experience the Park in Alternative 3

<b>Through Park Trail</b>	The through park trail would unify the park, providing visitors the opportunity to explore the park from one end to the other as a multi-day backpacking or biking trip. Alternatively visitors could explore the park on the through park trail in a series of day trips originating from trailheads throughout the park.
<b>New Recreation Nodes in the Middle of the Park</b>	New visitor uses facilities would enhance opportunities for a variety of visitor experiences in the middle of the park. These would be concentrated along the new through park trail, in the Glade Creek watershed, along a new trail from Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince, along the McKendree Road (WV SR 25), and in the Highland-Backus Plateau area.
<b>Existing Recreation Nodes</b>	Visitors would have access to a variety of recreation experiences at existing recreation nodes. Minor improvements to facilities would be focused primarily in existing recreation nodes that are located along the through park trail in the New River Parkway corridor (existing River Road corridor), as well as at Glade Creek, Grandview, McCreery, Terry, Stone Cliff, Dun Glen, Cunard, and Fayette Station.
<b>Discovery Sites</b>	Visitors would come upon and find cultural resources sites (from 30 to 35 sites) as they travel the park's trails. Interpretive media would tell the park's early settlement and industrial heritage stories.

### Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have *(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 3)*

<b>Appreciate life in the gorge – the human history story</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park there are cultural resource sites where human history stories could be told.</b></p> <p>Visitors would learn about the history of life in the gorge when they come upon and find cultural resource discovery sites located <u>along the through park trail, other new and existing trails, and to a lesser extent along roads (approximately 30 to 35 sites).</u></p> <p><u>Life in a railroading town during the park's industrial era would continue to be exemplified at Thurmond (see Classic Experiences above).</u></p> <p>Stabilized mining structures and town ruins at Nuttallburg Mining Complex and the Nuttallburg town site would tell stories about life in the gorge's historic coal mining towns (as in Alternative 1).</p>
<b>Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape (continued)</b>	<p>Visitors camping in the forest would experience nature and the sense of solitude that comes from spending extended time in the outdoors at existing campsites <u>and at new camping facilities, including:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>in the south end of the park, a developed campground at the river's edge</u></li> <li>- <u>in the middle of the park on river left along the new through park trail: 1) designated backcountry campsites that would enable a multi-day primitive hiking experience, 2) a new developed campground at Terry Beach, and 3) expansions to existing campgrounds</u></li> <li>- <u>in the middle of the park on river right: 1) designated backcountry campsites along a new trail from Prince to the Sandstone Visitor Center that would enable a multi-day primitive hiking experience, 2) a new developed campground on the plateau in the Highland-Backus area, 3) a new developed campground at Meadow Creek West, and 4) expansions to existing campgrounds</u></li> <li>- <u>in the north end of the park, a developed campground on the plateau</u></li> </ul> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls expansive vistas of rugged terrain, dense forest, and the turbulent river in the gorge below would evoke appreciation of the wild landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evoking a sense of wildness would be added along the new through park trail.</u></p>
<b>Experience the power of the river</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park the power of the river is evident wherever visitors can be on the river, be at the river's edge, or view the river from afar.</b></p> <p>The New River would carry paddlers along its freeflowing course through the gorge cut by its waters deep in the Appalachian Plateau. Those who ride the river as it descends</p>

## 2.18 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 3)

### Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued) *(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 3)*

through the gorge would feel its power and experience the thrill of adventure and discovery as the water flows turbulently over and amidst massive boulders transported through time from the cliff walls above. River experiences would be available from the existing network of river accesses for paddlers of all skill levels during most spring, summer, and fall months. Addition of a new river access in the south end (on river right) would provide an opportunity to access the New River above Sandstone Falls. Addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (at Meadow Creek West) would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips in the middle gorge. Addition of a new river access in the north end of the park (at Surprise) would enable improved lower gorge river trip experiences during summer low flows.

At the river's edge visitors could see, smell, and hear the river, feeling its power as they sense around them the scale of the gorge shaped by the flowing water. From the existing network of river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge visitors would experience the river as it flows calmly yet powerfully on its course northward; elsewhere visitors would experience a wild river flowing turbulently around rocks and boulders. In the south end of the park in the River Road corridor the river's edge experience would be enhanced by day-use area improvements included in the New River Parkway project (as in Alternative 1). A new day-use area would also provide visitor access to the river's edge in the middle of the park, in the south end of the park, and in the north end of the park (at Surprise).

From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls the depth of the gorge, the exposed cliff walls, and the massive boulders in the river below, would evidence the river's power to shape the landscape (as in Alternative 1). New opportunities for views evidencing the river's power to shape the landscape would be added along the new through park trail.

#### Experience scenic beauty

**Throughout the park its scenic beauty is evident from roads, trails, overlooks, and the river.**

From existing roads visitors would have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. In the middle of the park opportunities to experience the scenic quality of the park's landscape would be enhanced

#### Experience scenic beauty (continued)

Through cooperation with the WV DOH aimed at making improvements to McKendree Road and designating the road as a state scenic backway. Also, in the south end of the park, as visitors travel New River Parkway from Sandstone to Hinton the scenic beauty of the park would be evident in the dramatic landscape visible from the New River Bridge and along the parkway (as in Alternative 1). Also, in the north end of the park, efforts would be made to enhance opportunities for scenic vistas along Fayette Station Road by working with WV DOH to add pull-outs (as in Alternative 1).

Visitors traveling on existing trails would continue to have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. Visitors would also enjoy the park's scenic resources from the new through park trail and a network of new trails in the middle of the park, including a trail from the Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince and several trails in the Highland-Backus area.

Visitors would continue to have panoramic scenic views of the park's landscape from existing developed overlooks and from a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls (as in Alternative 1). New opportunities for panoramic scenic views would be added along the new through park trail.

### Classic Park Experiences *(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 3)*

#### Paddling the New River

Paddlers would continue to experience the power of the river and the park's wild character and natural beauty as they float the river, stopping to picnic, fish, visit natural and cultural sites of interest, and/or camp. Opportunities for paddlers of all skill levels would be enhanced by addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (at Meadow Creek West) that would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips. Addition of a new river access at Bass Lake would enhance

## 2.18 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 3)

### Classic Park Experiences (continued) *(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 3)*

	<p><u>experience in the lower gorge on peak visitation days and during low flow periods by reducing congestion on the river and by extending the length of full-day outfitted paddler access to the river in the upper gorge for paddling and fishing. Addition of a new river access at Surprise would enhance outfitted paddler trip logistics and the overall river trips. Addition of a new river access at Surprise would also increase visitor access along that road for camping and fishing and allow the improvement of several recreation sites upstream of Brooklyn by providing restrooms and formalized trail access. Several recreation sites along Glade Creek Road (Royal Pullout, Mill Creek, Grassy Shoals) would be enhanced by adding vehicle parking, formalized trail access and restrooms.</u> Opportunities for disabled paddlers would be enhanced by addition of disabled boater access at the Cunard and McCreery (Terry Beach) river accesses (in Alternatives 2 to 5). The condition of river recreation sites popular for river lunch stops, camping, and fishing would be enhanced by improving access and providing restroom facilities where practicable (in Alternatives 2 to 5). More frequent river patrols would provide visitor education and, as needed, increased enforcement of existing regulations related to group size, trash removal, and human waste removal where restrooms are not available (in Alternatives 2 to 5).</p>
<b>Sandstone Falls</b>	The boardwalk and recreational facilities at Sandstone would continue to bring visitors to the water's edge where they can feel the power of the river, experience its beauty, and learn about the park's significant natural resources (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Sandstone Falls Visitor Center</b>	At the Sandstone Falls Visitor Center visitors would continue to be oriented to the park <u>with an emphasis on diverse visitor experiences throughout the park (see Section 2.6.2 above).</u>
<b>Grandview</b>	Social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities at Grandview would continue in a setting where visitors can experience the scenic beauty of the park, the wildness of its landscape, and the power of the river (as in Alternative 1). Park visitors would enjoy safer access to the Turkey Spur overlook (as in Alternative 1). Theatre goers would continue to enjoy productions at an updated Cliffside Amphitheatre (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Thurmond</b>	Life in a railroading town during the park's industrial era would continue to be exemplified at Thurmond. <u>All remaining historic structures would be stabilized. Visitors could walk or drive town roads, looking at remaining structures, and learning about life in the gorge.</u> Visitors would be able to access historic buildings at Commercial Row once they are stabilized and contamination is remediated (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg</b>	Trails would provide visitor access to historic mining areas at Kaymoor and Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1). Nationally significant mining resources at Nuttallburg would be interpreted for visitors and made more accessible through parking and trail improvements (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Experiencing the Cliffs</b>	The massive sandstone cliffs in the Endless Wall area and elsewhere would continue to attract visitors seeking to experience their beauty as well as the thrill of adventure, exploration, and solitude of rock climbing (as in Alternative 1). Access to the Endless Wall would be made easier and safer by adding parking and by establishing designated and maintained trails to climbing routes (in Alternatives 2 to 5). Climbing and other visitor activities in the Endless Wall area would also be limited to day use (in Alternatives 2 to 5).
<b>Canyon Rim</b>	At Canyon Rim visitors would continue to be oriented to the park at the visitor center <u>with an emphasis on diverse visitor experiences throughout the park (see Section 2.6.2 above).</u> Visitors would continue to have opportunities to view the river and the gorge from existing overlooks (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Fayette Station Road</b>	Fayette Station Road would continue to be a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where visitors would experience the historic travel route across the river, learn about the park's industrial heritage, view the river, and feel its power (as in Alternative 1). Improvements to Fayette Station Road and parking facilities, as well as implementation of shuttle service during periods of high visitor use, would make for a safer visitor experience with more opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources and with fewer opportunities for visitor conflicts (in Alternatives 2 to 5).



# KEY

- Through Park Trail
- Existing Road / Improved Existing Road
- New Road
- Existing Trail / Improved Existing Trail
- New Trail
- Existing Recreation Node / Improved Existing Recreation Node
- New Recreation Node / Discovery Sites (conceptual)
- Future Connector Trail
- NPS land within National River Limits
- State Park Land within National River Limits
- Private Land within National River Limits
- Scenic Easement

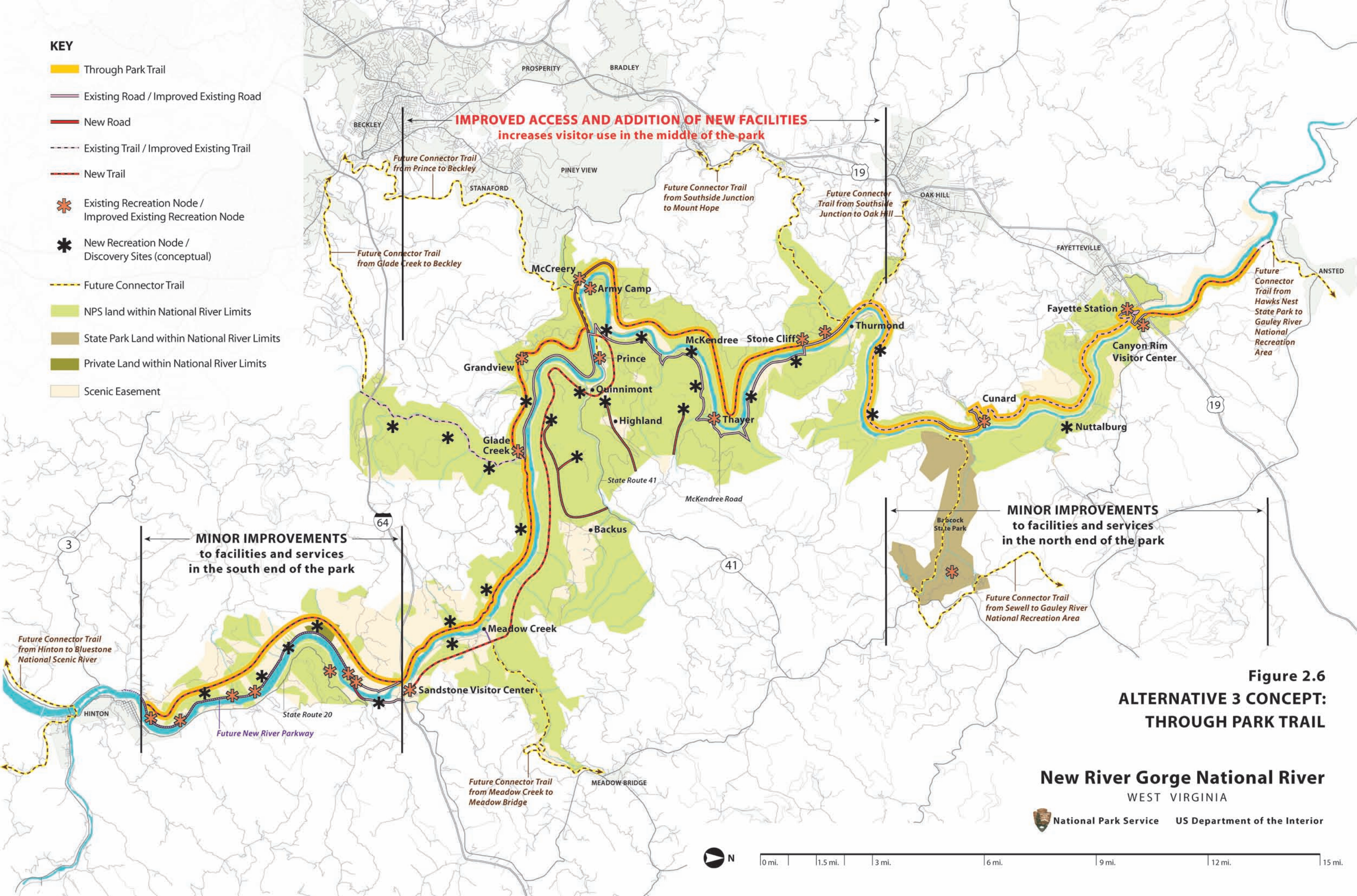


Figure 2.6  
ALTERNATIVE 3 CONCEPT:  
THROUGH PARK TRAIL



### ■ Visitor Orientation (Alternative 3)

Visitor orientation would focus on describing opportunities for exploring the park from the network of expanded trails, scenic roads, and river accesses. Visitors would learn about recreation opportunities, places where they can discover the park's significant natural and cultural resources, and the areas where different recreation activities are possible.

New park brochures and informational materials would describe the park's recreation activities, highlighting opportunities for paddling throughout the park and for hiking, biking, and camping in the middle of the park and along park trails, particularly the through park trail. Additional scenic drive brochures would describe vistas and other opportunities along McKendree Road and New River Parkway (existing River Road). Information materials would also describe the network of discovery sites found throughout the park, providing visitors an overview of the stories told and how discovery sites can be accessed.

Visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Sandstone would continue as the primary venues where visitor orientation would occur. From these locations visitors would be directed to trails and trailheads, river accesses, and places in the park. Working collaboratively with WV DOH, the park would seek to place signage along public roads directing visitors to recreation sites and visitor use facilities as they leave visitor centers and as they approach the park from US 19, US 60, I-64, and WV SR 41.

### 2.6.3 Resource Management (Alternative 3)

#### ■ Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems (Alternative 3)

**Resource Stewardship Strategies.** The management strategies shown in Table 2.12 are the actions that the NPS would implement to achieve and maintain over time desired natural resource conditions. The strategies address the management issues challenging the park relevant to maintaining natural processes and restoring natural systems. Implementation of these strategies would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5.

**Unfragmented Forest.** In Alternative 3 backcountry forest would be dispersed throughout the park. Only the park's ten most intact and unfragmented forest blocks (common to the action alternatives) would be managed as backcountry forest (see Table 2.19 and Figure 2.7). The backcountry zones would be managed to protect and restore unfragmented forest blocks largely free of human disturbance and to offer opportunities for visitors to be immersed in nature, relying on non-motorized access.

**Table 2.19**

New River Gorge National River  
**Alternative 3 – Management  
Zoning Summary**

Management Zone	Area (acres)
Backcountry	30,748 (43.0%)
Frontcountry	34,231 (47.8%)
River Corridor	5,525 (7.7%)
Historic Resource	599 (0.9%)
Park Development	443 (0.6%)

**Table 2.20**

New River Gorge National River  
**Backcountry Forest  
Management Zoning in  
Alternative 3** (see Figure 2.7)

**Backcountry Zones Common to  
Alternatives 2 to 5**

- Fall Branch
- Meadow Creek North
- Glade Creek
- Garden Ground
- Stretcher Neck
- Claremont
- Above Thurmond
- Rush Run
- Sewell
- Endless Wall

**Additional Areas Zoned Backcountry  
in Alternative 3**

(none)

Frontcountry forest zoning would apply to the remaining forest in the park, spread throughout the north and south ends and encompassing the extensive Bucklick Branch, Highland-Backus, and Dowdy Creek areas on river right in the middle of the park (see Table 2.20 and Figure 2.6). Within these areas large contiguous forest blocks would generally be maintained, although development for visitor use facilities might occur that would cause some forest fragmentation. Visitors would access the frontcountry forest by roads and by trails.

**Riparian Corridor.** No additional areas would be managed as riparian zones in Alternative 3 beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

#### ■ **Water Quality Management (Alternative 3)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 3 related to water quality management beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

#### ■ **Cultural Resource Management (Alternative 3)**

In Alternative 3 the park's early settlement/agricultural and industrial heritage stories would be told largely at discovery sites throughout the park. Cultural resource management actions would focus on stabilization and interpretation of cultural resources as discovery sites (from 30 – 35 sites) (see Section 2.4.5 Cultural Resource Management above). Visitors would come upon and find these sites as they experience the park, from the through park trail, from other new and existing park trails, and to a lesser extent from roads. Discovery sites would include a variety of cultural resources representative of the different archeological resources, cultural landscapes, historic structures, and ethnographic resources that tell the park's stories.

Other cultural resource management actions would include:

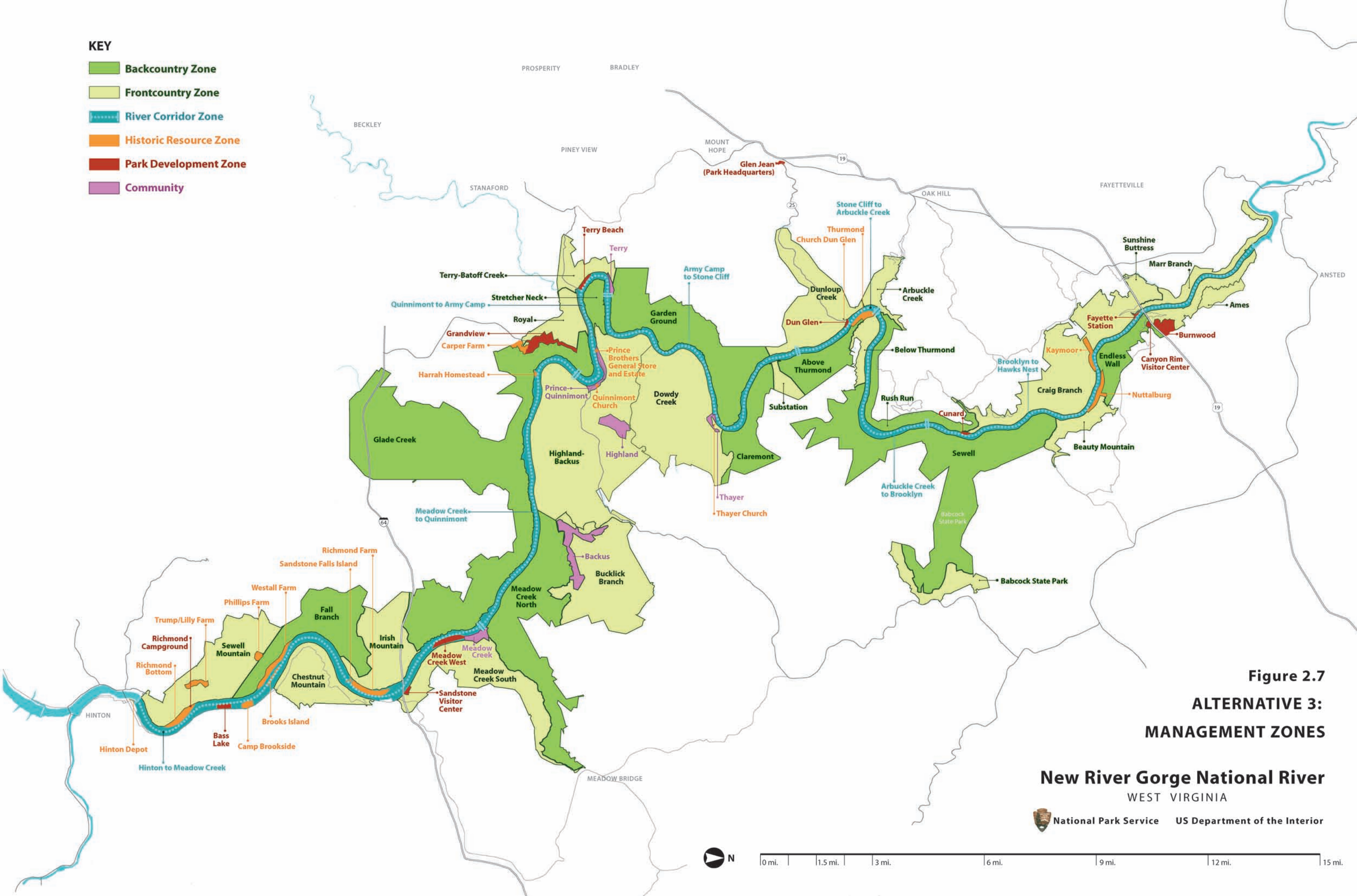
- in the southern end of the park, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of early settlement farmhouses
- at Thurmond, stabilization of remaining historic structures (maintaining the exteriors only) (in addition to only the Commercial Row structures as is Alternative 1)
- at Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), a variety of management actions would be implemented to treat resources, to tell the story of mining in the gorge, and to provide safe visitor access facilities

#### ■ **Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge (Alternative 3)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 3 to protect scenic resources in and around the gorge beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

**KEY**

-  Backcountry Zone
-  Frontcountry Zone
-  River Corridor Zone
-  Historic Resource Zone
-  Park Development Zone
-  Community



**Figure 2.7**  
**ALTERNATIVE 3:**  
**MANAGEMENT ZONES**

**New River Gorge National River**  
WEST VIRGINIA  
 National Park Service US Department of the Interior



Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources from the new through park trail as well as from a number of new shorter trails in the middle of the park (see Section 2.6.4 below).

#### **2.6.4 Visitor Use and Visitor Facilities (Alternative 3)**

##### **■ Hiking and Equestrian Use (Alternative 3)**

In addition to the trail system expansion common to Alternatives 2 to 5 and the trail improvements at Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), Alternative 3 would include a new through park trail along river left from Hinton to Fayette Station Bridge and continuing on along river right from Fayette Station Bridge to Hawks Nest. Designed to accommodate hikers and bikers, the through park trail would generally be composed of the following sections (see Figure 2.6):

- a new trail from Brooklyn (near Hinton) to Glade Creek Road at WV SR 41
- existing WV SR 41 and WV SR 41/8 from Glade Creek Road to Terry Beach
- a new trail from Terry Beach to Stone Cliff
- existing McKendree Road from Stone Cliff to Southside Junction
- existing trails and administrative roads from Southside Junction to the Bridge Trailhead (at Fayette Station Road)
- existing Fayette Station Road from the Bridge Street Trailhead to a new trailhead at Teays Landing
- a new trail from a new trailhead at Teays Landing to Hawks Nest State Park

In the New River Parkway corridor (existing River Road corridor) the new through park trail would be located at the toe of slope. Connector trails (with trailheads at or near the parkway) would provide access from New River Parkway (existing River Road) to the through park trail.

Expansions to the park trail system in the middle of the park to provide better access for visitors by adding several new trails. All new trails would generally use existing unmaintained trails. Possible new trails would include:

- a trail from Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince (on river right)
- a trail along Davis Branch (in the Meadow Creek North area) (with trailhead facilities)
- trails in the Highland-Backus area (with trailhead facilities)
- a trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain

Trailhead facilities would be provided for all new trails. Improvements would also be made to the Wolf Creek trailhead.

Alternative 3 would address the need for additional equestrian trails by providing a new equestrian loop trail in the Bucklick Branch area (with trailhead facilities).

#### ■ **Biking (Alternative 3)**

Alternative 3 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails as listed in the preceding section subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 3 possible new biking opportunities would include:

- a continuous trail open to biking from end to end of the park (the through park trail) composed of a combination of trail types (see preceding section)
- development of a new biking trail in the Highland-Backus frontcountry zone

#### ■ **Hunting (Alternative 3) (Continuation of Existing Hunting Program)**

In Alternative 3 hunting within the park would continue in accordance with the hunting and fishing regulations of the WV DNR (as in Alternatives 1 and 2). Hunting would generally be permitted throughout the park. A few areas would remain closed to hunting for safety reasons, including

- areas designated as safety zones in the park compendium (NPS 2007)
- areas within the historic boundaries of Grandview State Park and Sandstone Falls State Park
- the area within the boundary of Babcock State Park (which is managed by the state of West Virginia)

#### ■ **Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way (Alternative 3)**

In Alternative 3 the NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible. As in Alternative 1 priorities would be to secure legal crossings at locations where visitors currently frequently cross tracks illegally. In addition effort would be focused on securing legal crossings needed for development of the new through park trail and the new developed campground at Terry Beach.

#### ■ **Access and Parking (Alternative 3)**

In Alternative 3 management actions would generally maintain existing patterns of motorized access within the park, while permitting expansion of motorized access for visitors and/or administrative use in park development zones, historic resource zones, river corridor zones, and frontcountry zones. Almost one-half (43.0%) of the park would be zoned backcountry where roads and parking would be limited to zone perimeters (see Figure 2.7) and where only non-motorized access could occur in the zone interior.

In Alternative 3 access and parking improvements would focus on enhancing facilities in the middle part of the park, as follows:

- existing problems with inadequate parking at visitor facilities in the middle of the park would be addressed by expanding parking areas at the Glade Creek trailhead, the McCreery river access, and the Thayer campground and river access
- trailheads would provide adequate parking for visitors at new trails to be developed in the middle of the park (see Hiking and Equestrian Use above)
- trailheads with adequate parking would be provided along the length of the new through park trail (see Hiking and Equestrian Use above)
- a new park road would be built in the Highland-Backus area providing access to new trails in the plateau area and to a new developed campground
- the NPS would work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway

In addition, at Cunard existing problems with inadequate parking for private paddlers on peak visitation days would be alleviated by:

- adding parking for private paddlers at Cunard (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- adding a new river access at Surprise, including – as appropriate and as practicable – extension of Cunard Road and electrical service beyond Brooklyn and development of a river launch, drop-off areas and parking facilities (for outfitted paddlers and private paddlers), comfort/changing stations, picnicking facilities, and water supply
- **Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access) (Alternative 3)**

Additional visitor facilities associated with Alternative 3 would include camping, picnicking, and river access facilities – primarily in the middle part of the park. All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities (common to Alternatives 2 to 5).

In the middle of the park new visitor facilities or improvements to visitor facilities would occur on both sides of the river:

- on river left camping opportunities would be provided along the through park trail, including 1) expanded primitive campgrounds at Glade Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Mill Creek, 2) several groups of designated backcountry campsites distributed along the through park trail, and 3) a

developed campground at Terry Beach (if and when the required property could be acquired by the NPS from a willing seller)

- on river right new camping facilities would be developed, including 1) a new developed campground in the Highland-Backus plateau area, 2) several groups of designated backcountry campsites distributed along new trails and in the Highland-Backus plateau area, and 3) expanded or enhanced primitive campgrounds at Army Camp and Thayer

In addition in the south end of the park new developed campgrounds would be provided:

- in the south a new developed campground would be developed either at the Bass Lake site (if and when it could be acquired by the NPS from a willing seller) or at a park development zone in the New River Parkway corridor (existing River Road corridor), such as at Richmond Bottom
- in the south near the Sandstone Visitor Center, a new developed public campground would be developed at Meadow Creek West; in conjunction with this facility there would be an amphitheatre, picnic facilities, and a public river access site, including a river launch (with disabled boater access), parking, comfort/changing stations, and utilities

River access improvements associated with Alternative 3 would include:

- a new access at Meadow Creek West near the Sandstone Visitor Center
- a new river access at Bass Lake – generally serving fishermen and other day-use activities with limited outfitted paddler use – that would be built in conjunction with the new developed campground
- enhancements to improve safety and the visitor experience for private paddlers at the existing McCreery river access
- addition of disabled boater at McCreery and Glade Creek
- a new river access at Surprise (see Access and Parking above)
- at Cunard expansion of existing parking for private paddlers and addition of new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)

#### **2.6.5 Working with Local Communities (Alternative 3)**

##### **■ Sustaining Communities within the Park (Alternative 3)**

**Hinton.** No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 3 to strengthen the connection between the city, its residents, and the mission of the NPS at the park beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7 above).

**Thurmond.** Life in a railroading town during the park's industrial era would continue to be exemplified at Thurmond (see Table 2.18). Remaining historic structures would be stabilized. Visitors could explore the town looking at remaining structures and learning about life in the gorge. Visitation levels would increase slightly. The permanent residential population would remain at existing levels. The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with residents – including NPS staff residents – to address issues associated with living in the historic town.

**Other Communities within the Park.** Collaborative priorities for communities within the park in Alternative 3 are summarized in Table 2.21 below. The collaboration actions referenced in Table 2.21 are described above in the discussion of actions common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7).

### 2.6.6 Land Protection Priorities (Alternative 3)

#### ■ Land Protection (Alternative 3)

In the future the NPS land protection program would focus efforts on the highest priority properties still to be protected in the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). For Alternative 3 the priorities for working with willing sellers of private property would be further refined to focus on acquiring properties that are important to accomplishing the overall concept for the alternative, such as properties that:

- include a site for a developed campground near the river in the southern end of the park
- include sites needed for trailheads, trail connections, or recreational sites along the through park trail and along other new trails

#### ■ Stewardship of Private Land Remaining within the Park Boundary (Alternative 3)

In the future the NPS would work cooperatively with the owners of private lands remaining within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship of privately-owned resources and values that are fundamental to the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). In Alternative 3 NPS would further focus the stewardship program on the private lands that are of high priority for protection as noted in Section 2.4.8 above and in the preceding section (Land Protection Priorities).

### 2.6.7 Partnerships (Alternative 3)

#### ■ Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors (Alternative 3)

In the future the NPS would take a number of actions aimed at strengthening the connection between the public and the mission of the NPS at New River Gorge National River (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 3 to enhance local appreciation and understanding of the park beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

**Table 2.21 Alternative 3 – Collaborative Priorities for Communities within the Park\***

		Collaborative Actions by the NPS and Local Communities within the Park									
Community	Alternative 3 Setting	Collaboration Priority	Form Community Partner Group	Provide Technical Assistance to Communities for							Develop NPS Facilities, as Needed
				Developing a Community Vision Plan	Managing Change	Managing Visitor Impacts	Documenting Resources	Obtaining Grants	Managing Invasive Species	Providing Private Sector Visitor Services	
<b>Hinton</b>	a major gateway community partly within the park at its southern end; no major existing or new visitor use facilities	1	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
<b>Meadow Creek</b>	a community in the middle of the park where visitor access would be enhanced (minimum visitor through traffic); Sandstone Visitor Center and a few new visitor facilities in vicinity	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Prince/Quinni-mont</b>	a “recreation node” in the middle of the park where visitor access would be enhanced (visitor and public through traffic on WV SR 41); a few existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity; Prince Brothers General Store, the Prince Depot, and the Prince Estate would be interpreted as discovery sites	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Terry</b>	a community adjoining a new recreation node in the middle of the park where visitor access would be enhanced (no visitor through traffic, although it would be near the through park trail); a few existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Thayer</b>	a community along the McKendree Road Scenic Backway; a few existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Backus</b>	a community on plateau in the middle of the park where visitor access would be enhanced; numerous new visitor facilities in vicinity	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Highland</b>	a community on plateau in the middle of the park where visitor access would be enhanced; numerous new visitor facilities in vicinity	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Thurmond</b>	an attraction in the middle of the park along the through park trail; historic structures would be stabilized; visitation would increase slightly; residential population would remain stable	1				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 – High Priority    2 – Medium Priority    3 – Low Priority    ✓ - action recommended, as funding allows											

### **Gateway Community Partnerships (Alternative 3)**

In the future the NPS would expand efforts to work cooperatively with its gateway communities to define and accomplish shared goals (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 3 to enhance partnerships with the park's gateway communities beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

#### ■ **Regional Tourism Partnerships (Alternative 3)**

In the future the NPS would expand its participation in regional economic development planning efforts underway by the various regional planning agencies and organizations in southern West Virginia (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 2 related to NPS participation in these efforts beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

#### ■ **Other Partnerships (Alternative 3)**

In the future the NPS would expand its collaboration with other public agencies and groups – including Babcock and Hawks Nest State Parks, state and county agencies, and organized stakeholder groups (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 3 related to NPS partnerships with these entities beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

### **2.6.8 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Alternative 3)**

Table 2.22 identifies the desired resource conditions and desired visitor experiences for specific areas of the park in Alternative 3. The area-specific desired conditions focus on fundamental and other important resources and values and the visitor experience opportunities associated with them that would be appropriate in particular locations based on proposed management zoning.

Table 2.22 also identifies the general types of actions in specific areas of the park that would be needed and allowable to achieve desired conditions in Alternative 3. These are examples of the actions needed to move from existing conditions to desired conditions. Identifying the types of needed and allowable changes helps 1) to provide a sense of what management actions might occur and what development might look like in Alternative 3, 2) to identify the impacts of these actions, and 3) to estimate the general costs of implementing the actions.

### **2.6.9 Costs (Alternative 3)**

The NPS has prepared estimates of annual operating costs and one-time costs associated with Alternative 3 using NPS and industry cost estimating guidelines (see Table 2.37 in Section 2.14 below). Annual recurring costs include personnel and non-labor costs, such as utilities, vehicles, travel, and supplies. One-time capital investments include construction, exhibits, research and planning. These costs are presented for comparative purposes only and will be refined at a later date based

upon final design of facilities and other considerations. Some projects have the potential to be funded through partnerships and volunteers, or through shared funding with other agencies. Therefore, actual costs would vary depending on when specific actions are implemented and on contributions by partners and volunteers.

#### ■ **NPS Annual Operating Costs and Staffing Requirements (Alternative 3)**

NPS annual operating costs associated with Alternative 3 are estimated to be \$15,740,000 (2009 dollars). This includes the anticipated cost for staff salaries and benefits for 188 full-time equivalent staff, utilities, supplies, leasing (including leased park offices, as in Alternative 3), and other materials needed for park maintenance and operations.

Operating costs for Alternative 3 include the addition of 28 new FTE. The new positions include one new FTE to help develop and manage partnerships with the gateway communities, additional protection rangers to manage and cover new campgrounds and the Through the Park Trail, new maintenance staff to maintain and service the new campgrounds, trails and an all new river access facility in addition to improvements to existing day use facilities and new interpretive staff to expand interpretive programs and service increased visitation as the result of new facilities.

#### ■ **NPS One-Time Costs (Alternative 3)**

NPS one-time costs associated with Alternative 3 are estimated to be \$28,700,000 (2009 dollars) including one-time facilities costs and non-facilities costs.

Facility costs include projects such as the following:

- rehabilitate the Richmond-Hamilton, Trump-Lilly and Vallandingham farmhouses for lease
- stabilize exterior only of 20 historic houses in Thurmond
- rehabilitate Thurmond's commercial row through partnership
- provide new trails for rock climber access
- provide a new through the park trail with multiple trailheads
- provide two new equestrian trails
- provide new hiking trails and trailheads at Davis Branch, in the Dowdy Creek and Highland/Backus areas
- provide a new stacked loop biking trail in front country area
- provide new improvements to turkey spur at Grandview
- improve Cunard and Fayette Station river access areas to relieve congestion
- provide new river access facility at Surprise



- expand parking at middle gorge areas (Glade Creek, McCreery and Thayer)
- provide new roads to access Highland Backus plateau areas and develop new campground
- relocate Stone Cliff campground from riparian area
- develop a new camping facility at Meadow Creek West
- expand existing primitive campgrounds at Glade Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Army Camp
- develop new designated backcountry campsites
- develop disabled boater access and other improvements at McCreery
- develop new campground with river access at Terry Beach

Non-facility costs include projects such as the following:

- develop 30 discovery sites accessible from the through park trail
- pedestrian access across CSX right-of-way at new campgrounds
- develop new scenic vistas
- install and maintain information kiosks at gateway communities

Table 2.22 Alternative 3 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Development Areas</b>			
<b>Richmond Campground</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>newly acquired area with limited infrastructure</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground (one campground would be developed south of I-64 in a park development zone on river left, such as Richmond Bottom, OR at Bass Lake on river right)</li> </ul>
<b>Bass Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bass Lake Campground (private)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground (one campground would be developed south of I-64 in a park development zone on river left, such as Richmond Bottom, OR at Bass Lake on river right)</li> <li>provide a public river access (including facilities for disabled boaters)</li> <li>provide picnicking and hiking facilities near the river</li> </ul>
<b>Sandstone Visitor Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandstone Visitor Center</li> <li>parking, picnicking facilities, and public restrooms</li> <li>NPS operations facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek West</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the park</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground</li> <li>offer amphitheatre-based interpretive programs</li> <li>provide a public river access facility including a river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> <li>provide a through park trail segment (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Terry Beach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McCreery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>demand exceeds capacity during peak visitation periods leading to safety issues and visitor conflicts</li> <li>private paddler safety issues due to pedestrian crossing of WV SR 41)</li> <li>NPS unable to acquire property needed to relocate parking and address safety issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>Terry Beach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>private river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on peak visitation days, eliminate safety concerns at McCreery river access by prohibiting commercial use of the river access</li> <li>provide facilities for disabled boaters to access the river at McCreery</li> <li>provide picnicking facilities with parking and pedestrian access at McCreery</li> <li>provide opportunities for the public to camp at a developed campground at Terry Beach</li> <li>provide trailhead parking for the through park trail</li> </ul>
<b>Dun Glen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>Dun Glen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day use facilities (picnicking, parking, restrooms)</li> <li>group campground (in floodplain)</li> <li>park operations facility (in remnants of Dun Glen Hotel) (block access to river – functionally obsolete)</li> <li>park housing (dorms) (functionally obsolete)</li> </ul> </li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Corman Spur Line at Southside Junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a through park trail segment</li> </ul>
<b>Cunard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>crowded conditions during most summer weekends, especially when river levels are low</li> <li>inadequate private paddler</li> <li>parking inadequate boat slide capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a new river access at Surprise (see <i>Arbuckle Creek to Brooklyn River Corridor Zone</i> below)</li> <li>interpret the Cunard tipple and coke ovens</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>

Table 2.22 Alternative 3 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited river access for disabled boaters</li> <li>visitor conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Fayette Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (parking, picnicking, public restrooms)</li> <li>CSX Main Line (active)</li> <li>visitors (primarily private paddlers) frequently illegally cross the CSX Main Line to reach the river access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate WV SR 82 as a segment of the through park trail</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource Areas</b>			
<b>Richmond Bottom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richmond-Hamilton Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farmhouse (habitable condition), split-log barns (period condition), other outbuildings (period condition)</li> <li>fields not leased for agriculture</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>no interpretive programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Vallandingham Farm               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>log cabin (not habitable), log smokehouse, other outbuildings</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Richmond-Hamilton Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>interpret the Richmond-Hamilton Farm site</li> <li>provide a connector trail to the through park trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul> </li> <li>at Vallandingham Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>interpret the Vallandingham Farm site</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Trump-Lilly Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farm, outbuildings, farm fields, and orchard</li> <li>excellent example of post-bellum subsistence farmstead in uplands of the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register</li> <li>farmhouse not habitable</li> <li>approximately 10 percent of historic fields are presently open</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> </ul>
<b>Westfall Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>privately-owned; recently subdivided and some new homes constructed</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>Cochran Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outbuildings, cemetery, small pond (filling in)</li> <li>most of site is an open field with</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Cochran Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a connector trail to the through park trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Phillips Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>log cabin and log outbuilding (fairly intact)</li> <li>timber-frame outbuilding (badly deteriorated)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpret the stabilized Phillips Farm site</li> </ul>
<b>Harrah Homestead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame house, wood-frame outbuildings, log smokehouse (all in very poor condition)</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpret the stabilized Harrah Homestead site</li> </ul>

Table 2.22 Alternative 3 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Prince Brothers General Store</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame store (recently stabilized on exterior)</li> <li>last surviving commercial building of its type along the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register (for its architectural design)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpret the stabilized Prince Brothers General Store</li> </ul>
<b>Thurmond</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>town mostly owned by the NPS, although some houses remain in private ownership and are occupied year-round</li> <li>entire town site included within the Thurmond Historic District (listed on National Register)</li> <li>restored Thurmond Depot (used as NPS visitor center) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>Commercial Row (stabilized on exterior) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>remnants of C&amp;O train yard and passenger depot</li> <li>various frame houses (variable condition – some in poor condition, some recently stabilized on exterior only)</li> <li>vegetation (kudzu) negatively impacted site</li> <li>structures at Commercial row have lead and asbestos contamination</li> <li>inadequate water supply and wastewater treatment systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stabilize remaining historic structures (on the exterior only) (in addition to Commercial Row structures, as in Alternative 1)</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor Areas</b>			
<b>Meadow Creek to Quinnimont</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>Glade Creek               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>Glade Creek campground and day-use area (high use) (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mill Creek               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping occurs in floodplain)</li> <li>no restrooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>walk-in camping at Grassy Shoals, Mill Creek, and Royal Pull-Out</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Glade Creek:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expand the existing campground</li> <li>provide facilities for disabled boaters to access the river</li> </ul> </li> <li>at Mill Creek, provide a vault toilet</li> <li>at Bennett Farm, interpret the site</li> </ul>
<b>Quinnimont to Army Camp</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>Grandview Sandbar               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>campground (high use) (demand frequently exceeds capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Army Camp               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>campground (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line on river left (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Army Camp, expand the existing campground</li> <li>at Grandview Sandbar, expand the existing campground</li> </ul>
<b>Army Camp to Stone Cliff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thayer               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (low use)</li> <li>day-use area and campground (undesignated sites) (demand frequently exceeds capacity) (no public restrooms)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross CSX Main Line to reach Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, and Todd Beach (for camping)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Thayer:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate campsites in the area now used for primitive camping</li> <li>provide a vault toilet</li> <li>improve existing river access, parking, and picnicking facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public</li> </ul>

Table 2.22 Alternative 3 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river rest stop at Dowdy Creek where paddlers frequently illegally cross under CSX Main Line to reach Dowdy Falls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access to the river across the CSX right-of-way at Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, and Todd Beach</li> </ul>
<b>Stone Cliff to Arbuckle Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stone Cliff               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>campground and day-use area (in floodplain) (high use)</li> <li>Stone Cliff Trail and trailhead (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Stone Cliff, provide a through park trail segment (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Arbuckle Creek to Brooklyn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACE river access (private)</li> <li>Brooklyn to Southside Junction Administrative Road</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a public river access facility at Surprise, including as appropriate and as practicable, a river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> </ul>
<b>Brooklyn to Hawks Nest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undesignated camping (moderate use)</li> <li>river fishing (no day-use facilities) (moderate use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Teays Landing river access (private)</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right upstream of Cunard and on river right and river left downstream of Cunard (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Main Line               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to reach the lower railroad area (for fishing and boating)</li> <li>to reach Short Creek (for camping and fishing)</li> <li>to reach Kaymoor via the tunnel under the tracks (for hiking)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Teays Landing, provide a through park trail segment (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way in the lower railroad area, at Short Creek, and at Kaymoor</li> </ul>
<b>Forest Areas</b>			
<b>Sewell Mountain (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment along the toe of slope</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the through park trail</li> </ul>
<b>Fall Branch (Backcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment along the toe of slope</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Mountain (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail segment of the through park trail from New River Parkway (existing River Road) to the Glade Creek drainage</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the through park trail</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek South (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meadow Creek – water quality impaired</li> <li>fish stocking in Meadow Creek (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>CSX Meadow Creek rail line (active)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a segment of a trail from Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> </ul>

Table 2.22 Alternative 3 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Meadow Creek North</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>along Davis Branch</li> <li>a segment of a trail from Prince to Sandstone Visitor Center</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Davis Branch Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Bucklick Branch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide an equestrian loop trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Highland-Backus</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River on the gorge wall</li> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities is heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a park access road</li> <li>provide trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally in the Highland-Backus area</li> <li>a segment of a trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> <li>Highland Mountain Biking Trail</li> <li>a segment of a trail from Prince to Sandstone Visitor Center</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide trailheads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to access new hiking trails</li> <li>to access new biking trails</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a developed campground in the plateau area</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Dowdy Creek</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River on the gorge wall</li> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no designated trailheads – two sites with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a park access road to the plateau area</li> <li>provide several designated backcountry campsite groups along the Dowdy Creek Highland Mountain Trail</li> <li>provide trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince</li> <li>from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain Trail</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince Trail</li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Claremont</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>fishing – Buffalo Creek (low use)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – two sites with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Substation</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Glade Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>popular hunting and fishing area (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR and Glade-Pinch Trout Association</li> <li>fish stocking in Mill Creek by WV DNR</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail provides fishing access and a connection from the rim to the river (admin vehicles permitted on upper section)</li> <li>Polls Plateau Trail, Kates Plateau Trail and Kates Falls Trail provide access for primitive camping and hunting</li> <li>Lower Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>Upper Glade Creek Trailhead (demand exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Cloverdale Road area used for access to Kates Plateau Trail although no trailhead facilities are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide several designated backcountry campsite groups</li> <li>complete studies to understand impacts of stocking on native trout fish stocking; continue to support stocking by WV DNR and park partners, if deemed appropriate</li> <li>provide a through park trail segment</li> <li>provide trailheads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expand parking capacity at Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>provide a trailhead at Cloverdale Road</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the through park trail</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 2.22 Alternative 3 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Royal</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line (active)</li> <li>Piney Creek - water quality impaired</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment</li> </ul>
<b>Terry/Batoff Creek</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line (active)</li> <li>Piney Creek - water quality impaired</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment</li> </ul>
<b>Garden Ground</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stone Cliff Trail (low use)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one plateau site with no developed facilities heavily used for parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> </ul>
<b>Dunloup Creek</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River at the river level</li> <li>Thurmond-Minden Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Dunloup Creek by WV DNR (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>CSX Corman spur line (active)</li> <li>recurring flooding along Dunloup Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park trail</li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Arbuckle Creek</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thurmond-Minden Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>Arbuckle Creek – impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park trail</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> </ul>
<b>Rush Run</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn Mine Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>Cunard Access Road</li> <li>Cunard Trailhead parking area</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park trail</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Craig Branch</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road “classic park experience” (high use)</li> <li>numerous park trails (high use)</li> <li>South Nuttall climbing area (low use)</li> <li>Kaymoor climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Butcher Branch climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Longmont Trailhead</li> <li>Bridge Trailhead</li> <li>Wolf Creek Trailhead (demand frequently exceeds capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park trail</li> <li>improve the existing Wolf Creek Trailhead</li> </ul>
<b>Above Thurmond</b> (Backcountry Areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River near the river level</li> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Ames</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>Bridge Buttress climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Bridge Buttress parking area</li> <li>Bubba City climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Junkyard climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>no designated trails to climbing routes at Bubba City or Junkyard</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>mutual park management goals are effectively realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park trail segment</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>

## 2.7 Alternative 4 – River Gateways and Rim to River Experiences

### 2.7.1 Overall Management Concept (Alternative 4)

Alternative 4 recognizes river gateways and the rim to river experiences that take visitors to them as the primary access points and orientation venues in the park (see Figure 2.8).<sup>1</sup> River gateways would be enhanced to tell gorge stories while providing improved river, trail, and recreational access. The NPS and gateway communities would work cooperatively to enhance rim to river experiences.

### 2.7.2 Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation (Alternative 4)

#### ■ Experiencing the Park (Alternative 4)

Alternative 4 would connect visitors to the park through experiences that take them on roads and trails from gateway communities and other places on the plateau, over the rim, into the gorge, and down to the New River. As they near the river, visitors would arrive at river gateways – located either within the park or at its edge – where they would learn about nearby park resources and recreation opportunities. Visitor use facilities would be clustered within or near river gateways offering a variety of interpretive and recreation experiences. From river gateways visitors would move out into the park on the water by boat, on trails by foot or bicycle, or on scenic roads. The park's stories would be told at rehabilitated cultural resources in river gateways – such as Hinton, Prince, and Thurmond – and at cultural resource “discovery sites” along rim to river trails and roads. Partnerships between the NPS and the park's gateway communities would seek to enhance the park experience by providing better visitor orientation, by promoting services needed by visitors in gateway communities, by fostering improved wayfinding signage, and by promoting complementary interpretive and recreational experiences at other attractions in southern West Virginia.

Table 2.23 provides an overview of potential visitor experiences in various places in the park. Table 2.23 also summarizes management actions in Alternative 4 that would define where and how visitors would enjoy the important experiences that they may have at New River Gorge National River, including:

- appreciating life in the gorge – the human history story
- appreciating/experiencing the wildness of the landscape
- experiencing the power of the river
- experiencing scenic beauty

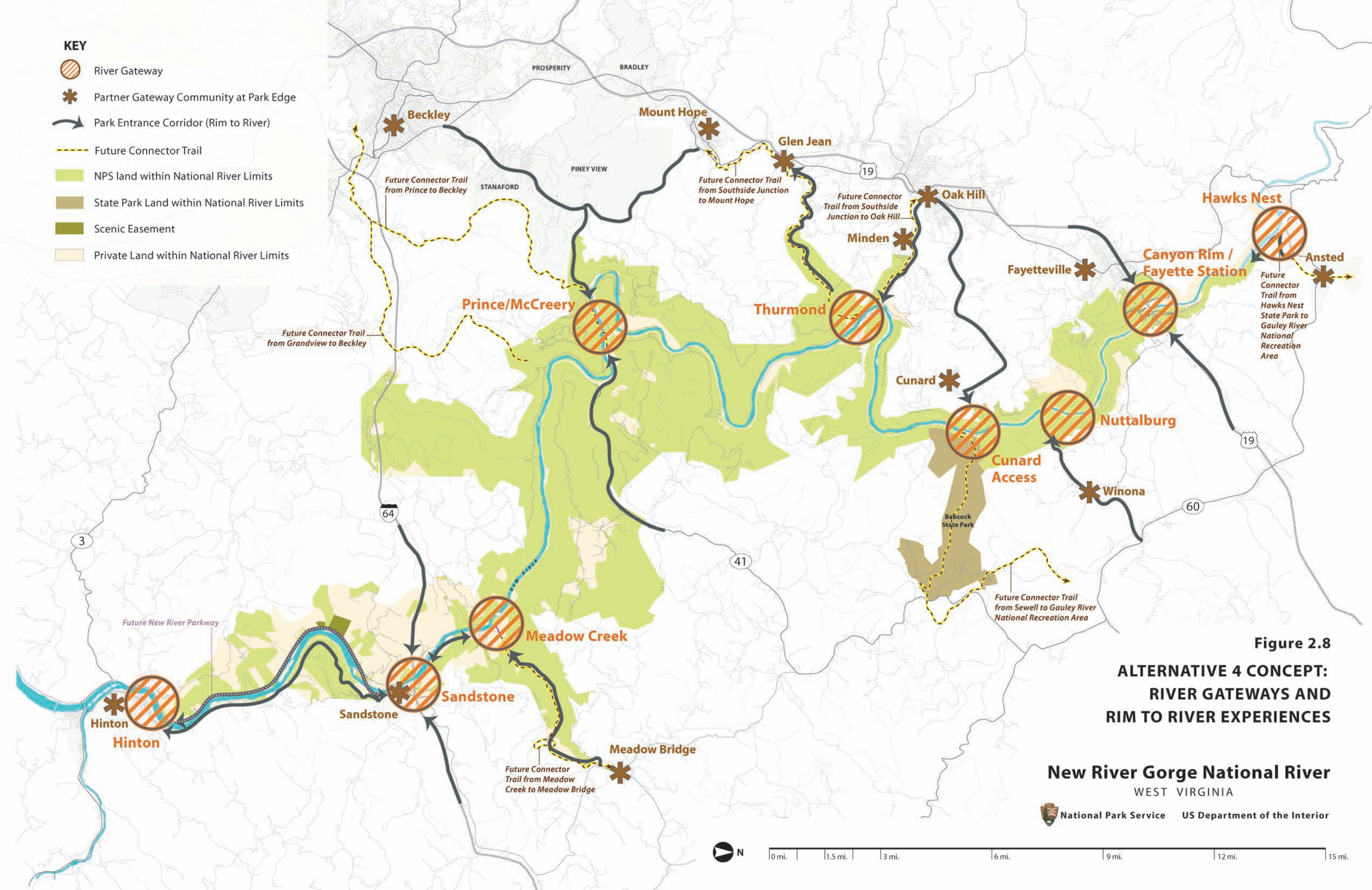
Visitors would also continue to enjoy the classic park experiences at Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Thurmond, Endless Wall, Canyon Rim, and Fayette Station Road; new

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<sup>1</sup> See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 above for a general comparison of the alternative concepts and a summary of the broad organizing principles for each alternative



- KEY**
- River Gateway
  - Partner Gateway Community at Park Edge
  - Park Entrance Corridor (Rim to River)
  - Future Connector Trail
  - NPS land within National River Limits
  - State Park Land within National River Limits
  - Scenic Easement
  - Private Land within National River Limits



**Figure 2.8**  
**ALTERNATIVE 4 CONCEPT:**  
**RIVER GATEWAYS AND**  
**RIM TO RIVER EXPERIENCES**

**New River Gorge National River**  
 WEST VIRGINIA



National Park Service

US Department of the Interior



Table 2.23 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 4)

Places Where Visitors Would Generally Experience the Park in Alternative 4	
<b>River Gateways</b>	River gateways would be places at the river level – within the park or at its edge – where visitors would be oriented to the local park area, and from which they would move out into the park via trails, roads, and/or the river. At river gateways visitors would learn about recreation activities and the opportunities in the vicinity to explore the park and to experience its resources and history. Visitor facilities – such as river accesses, trailheads, day-use areas, scenic vistas, and campgrounds – would be clustered in or very near river gateways. Historic resources would be rehabilitated for visitor use. Some river gateways would offer commercial services for visitors, such as lodging, food service, grocery stores, sport shops, and guide service.
<b>Partner Gateway Communities</b>	Partner gateway communities would include the communities adjoining or near the park where visitors arrive from outside the region, where many stay while visiting the park, and where many receive initial orientation to the area. Small visitor contact facilities and/or information kiosks would provide information on recreation activities, visitor facilities, and interpretive programs at New River Gorge as well as at other attractions in the region. Gateway communities would typically offer commercial services for visitors – varying from a full range of services in larger gateways to very limited services in smaller gateways. Gateway communities and the NPS would enter into cooperative partnerships to ensure that both parties would benefit from one another's actions to protect park resources, to enhance the visitor experience, and to generally contribute to the park's position as a major tourist attraction in the region.
<b>Rim to River Trails and Roads</b>	Rim to river experiences would occur along roads and trails that connect plateau areas above the rim to the river below. Traveling these routes by vehicle, foot, or bicycle, visitors could appreciate the wildness of the park, its beauty, and the power of the river evidenced by the rugged terrain and the depth of the gorge. Waysides along rim to river trails and cultural resource "discovery sites" would tell the park's stories. Many rim to river roads and trails would begin at the park's gateway communities and would end at its river gateways.
Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 4)</i>	
<b>Appreciate life in the gorge – the human history story</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park there are cultural resource sites where human history stories could be told.</b></p> <p><u>Visitors to the park's river gateways and to the New River Parkway corridor (existing New River Parkway corridor) in the south end of the park would have opportunities to learn about life in the gorge by visiting rehabilitated cultural resources that are leased through the NPS historic leasing program.</u></p> <p><u>Life in a railroading town during the park's industrial era would continue to be exemplified at the Thurmond River Gateway (see Classic Experiences above). It would also be represented at Prince/McCreery River Gateway where various sites would be rehabilitated and interpreted.</u></p> <p>Visitors would also learn about the history of life in the gorge when they come upon and find cultural resource discovery sites <u>along trails at or near river gateways and along rim to river trails (approximately 20 to 25 sites).</u></p> <p>Stabilized mining structures and town ruins at Nuttallburg Mining Complex and the Nuttallburg town site would tell stories about life in the gorge's historic coal mining towns (as in Alternative 1).</p>
<b>Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape</b>	<p><b>A sense of wildness dominates the landscape setting in most areas of the park.</b></p> <p>Blocks of intact and unfragmented forest that are removed from river gateways and primary rim to river travel routes would be managed as backcountry forest, preserving their wild character and enhancing the perception of the park's wildness as visitors experience the park. <u>Overall, backcountry forest blocks would compose approximately 60.8 percent of the park.</u></p> <p>When paddling the river visitors would be transported to remote and wild areas in the upper, middle, and lower gorge, relying on the existing network of river accesses which</p>

**Table 2.23 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 4)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 4)</i>	
<b>Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape (continued)</b>	<p>make possible a variety of paddling experiences in a wild landscape setting. <u>Addition of a new river access in the south end (on river right) would provide a opportunity to access the New River above Sandstone Falls. Addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (at Meadow Creek West) would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips in the middle gorge. Replacement of the McCreery river access with a new river access at Terry Beach would facilitate private paddlers safely accessing the river for trips in the middle gorge.</u></p> <p>Visitors venturing into the park's forest would explore the park making their way <u>along a greatly expanded network of trails</u> at times near the water's edge and at times looking into the gorge. <u>New trails would offer visitors rim to river hiking experiences at numerous locations throughout the park. New trails would also offer visitors hiking experiences at numerous locations in and around river gateways.</u> Exploration of the park by bicycle – pending adoption of a special regulation and subject to a development of a trail management plan – would occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones and would occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones. <u>Bikers could also explore the park on a new biking trail in the Highland-Backus frontcountry zone. Visitors could also explore the park by horseback in the Bucklick Branch area of the park.</u></p> <p>Visitors camping in the forest would experience nature and the sense of solitude that comes from spending extended time in the outdoors at existing campsites <u>and at new camping facilities, including:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>near the Meadow Creek River Gateway, a new developed campground at the river's edge</u></li> <li>- <u>in the Prince/McCreery River Gateway area, 1) a new developed campground at Terry Beach, and 2) expansions to existing campgrounds</u></li> <li>- <u>on the plateau near the Prince/McCreery River Gateway, a new developed campground on the plateau</u></li> <li>- <u>in the Canyon Rim/Fayette Station River Gateway, a new developed campground on the plateau</u></li> </ul> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls expansive vistas of rugged terrain, dense forest, and the turbulent river in the gorge below would evoke appreciation of the wild landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evoking a sense of wildness would be added along rim to river trails.</u></p>
<b>Experience the power of the river</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park the power of the river is evident wherever visitors can be on the river, be at the river's edge, or view the river from afar.</b></p> <p>The New River would carry paddlers along its freeflowing course through the gorge cut by its waters deep in the Appalachian Plateau. Those who ride the river as it descends through the gorge would feel its power and experience the thrill of adventure and discovery as the water flows turbulently over and amidst massive boulders transported through time from the cliff walls above. River experiences would be available from the existing network of river accesses for paddlers of all skill levels during most spring, summer, and fall months. <u>Addition of a new river access in the south end (on river right) would provide a opportunity to access the New River above Sandstone Falls. Addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (at Meadow Creek West) would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips in the middle gorge. Replacement of the McCreery river access with a new river access at Terry Beach would facilitate private paddlers safely accessing the river for trips in the middle gorge.</u></p> <p>At the river's edge visitors could see, smell, and hear the river, feeling its power as they sense around them the scale of the gorge shaped by the flowing water. From the existing network of river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge visitors would experience the river as it flows calmly yet powerfully on its course northward; elsewhere visitors would experience a wild river flowing turbulently around rocks and boulders. In the south end of the park in the River Road corridor the river's edge experience would be enhanced by day-use area improvements included in the New River Parkway project (as in Alternative 1). <u>A new day-use area would also provide visitor access to the river's edge near the Meadow</u></p>

Table 2.23 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 4)

Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued) <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 4)</i>	
Experience the power of the river (continued)	<p><u>Creek River Gateway, in the south end of the park, and in the north end of the park near the Cunard River Gateway (at Surprise).</u></p> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls the depth of the gorge, the exposed cliff walls, and the massive boulders in the river below, would evidence the river's power to shape the landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evidencing the river's power to shape the landscape would be added along rim to river trails and along new trails in and around river gateways.</u></p>
Experience scenic beauty	<p><b>Throughout the park its scenic beauty is evident from roads, trails, overlooks, and the river.</b></p> <p>From existing roads visitors would have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. In the south end of the park, as visitors travel New River Parkway (existing River Road) from Sandstone to Hinton the scenic beauty of the park would be evident in the dramatic landscape visible from the New River Bridge and along the parkway (as in Alternative 1). A new park road would provide access to scenic areas on the plateau in the Highland-Backus area. In the north end of the park, efforts would be made to enhance opportunities for scenic vistas along Fayette Station Road by working with WV DOH to add pull-outs (as in Alternative 1).</p> <p>Visitors traveling on existing trails would continue to have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. <u>Visitors would also enjoy the park's scenic resources from the rim to river trails and new trails in and around river gateways.</u></p> <p>Visitors would continue to have panoramic scenic views of the park's landscape from existing developed overlooks and from a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for panoramic scenic views would be added along rim to river trails and along new trails in and around river gateways.</u></p>
Classic Park Experiences <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 4)</i>	
Paddling the New River	<p>Paddlers would continue to experience the power of the river and the park's wild character and natural beauty as they float the river, stopping to picnic, fish, visit natural and cultural sites of interest, and/or camp. <u>Opportunities for paddlers of all skill levels would be enhanced by addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (at Meadow Creek West) that would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips.</u> Opportunities for disabled boaters would be enhanced by addition of disabled boater access at the Cunard and McCreery (Terry Beach) river accesses (in Alternatives 2 to 5). The condition of river recreation sites popular for river lunch stops, camping, and fishing would be enhanced by improving access and providing restroom facilities where practicable (in Alternatives 2 to 5). More frequent river patrols would provide visitor education and, as needed, increased enforcement of existing regulations related to group size, trash removal, and human waste removal where restrooms are not available (in Alternatives 2 to 5).</p>
Sandstone Falls	<p>The boardwalk and recreational facilities at Sandstone would continue to bring visitors to the water's edge where they can feel the power of the river, experience its beauty, and learn about the park's significant natural resources (as in Alternative 1).</p>
Sandstone Falls Visitor Center	<p>At the Sandstone Falls Visitor Center visitors would continue to be oriented to the park <u>with an emphasis on connecting visitors to the park through experiences that take them on roads and trails from gateway communities and other places on the plateau, over the rim, into the gorge, and down to the New River (see Section 2.7.2 above).</u></p>
Grandview	<p>Social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities at Grandview would continue in a setting where visitors can experience the scenic beauty of the park, the wildness of its landscape, and the power of the river (as in Alternative 1). Park visitors would enjoy safer access to the Turkey Spur overlook (as in Alternative 1). Theatre goers would continue to enjoy productions at an updated Cliffside Amphitheatre (as in Alternative 1).</p>

**Table 2.23 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 4)**

<b>Classic Park Experiences (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 4)</i>	
<b>Thurmond</b>	Thurmond – a river gateway in the north end of the park – would become a major visitor attraction where the railroading story would be told. Contamination at Commercial Row structures would be remediated (as in Alternative 1) <u>and the buildings rehabilitated so that commercial activities can return to the town (through the park's leasing program). The town would be home to some NPS staff that would live in rehabilitated historic houses. Visitors might also be able to stay in the town in lodging made available in rehabilitated historic houses. Historic buildings that are not rehabilitated would be stabilized and restored on the exterior only.</u>
<b>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg</b>	<u>Nuttallburg would be highlighted as a river gateway in the north end of the park where the park's industrial story would be told.</u> Trails would provide visitor access to historic mining areas at Kaymoor and Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1). Nationally significant mining resources at Nuttallburg would be interpreted for visitors and made more accessible through parking and trail improvements (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Experiencing the Cliffs</b>	The massive sandstone cliffs in the Endless Wall area and elsewhere would continue to attract visitors seeking to experience their beauty as well as the thrill of adventure, exploration, and solitude of rock climbing (as in Alternative 1). Access to the Endless Wall would be made easier and safer by adding parking and by establishing designated and maintained trails to climbing routes (in Alternatives 2 to 5). Climbing and other visitor activities in the Endless Wall area would also be limited to day use (in Alternatives 2 to 5).
<b>Canyon Rim</b>	At Canyon Rim visitors would continue to be oriented to the park at the visitor center <u>with an emphasis on connecting visitors to the park through experiences that take them on roads and trails from gateway communities and other places on the plateau, over the rim, into the gorge, and down to the New River (see Section 2.7.2 above).</u> Visitors would continue to have opportunities to view the river and the gorge from existing overlooks (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Fayette Station Road</b>	Fayette Station Road would continue to be a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where visitors would experience the historic travel route across the river, learn about the park's industrial heritage, view the river, and feel its power (as in Alternative 1). Improvements to Fayette Station Road and parking facilities, as well as implementation of shuttle service during periods of high visitor use, would make for a safer visitor experience with more opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources and with fewer opportunities for visitor conflicts (in Alternatives 2 to 5). <u>A new pedestrian walkway would enhance access from parking above the CSX right-of-way to the river.</u>

management actions consistent with the overall concept for Alternative 4 would enhance the visitor experience at Thurmond and at Fayette Station Road.

#### ■ Visitor Orientation (Alternative 4)

Visitor orientation would focus on describing opportunities for exploring the park along rim to river trails, within and near river gateways, and along new trails emanating from river gateways. Visitors would learn about recreation opportunities, places where they can discover the park's significant natural and cultural resources, and the areas where different recreation activities are possible.

New park brochures and informational materials would describe the park's rim to river experiences and its river gateways.

Visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Sandstone would continue as the primary venues where visitor orientation would occur. From these locations visitors would be directed to rim to river trails and to river gateways. Working collaboratively with WV DOH, the park would seek to place signage along public roads directing visitors to rim to river trails and river gateways as they leave visitor centers and as they approach the park from US 19, US 60, I-64, and WV SR 41.

Visitor orientation would also occur at partner gateway communities and in river gateways. Information about the park would be available at small visitor contact facilities and/or kiosks.

### 2.7.3 Resource Management (Alternative 4)

#### ■ Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems (Alternative 4)

**Resource Stewardship Strategies.** The management strategies shown in Table 2.12 are the actions that the NPS would implement to achieve and maintain over time desired natural resource conditions. The strategies address the management issues challenging the park relevant to maintaining natural processes and restoring natural systems. Implementation of these strategies would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5.

**Unfragmented Forest.** In Alternative 4 blocks of unfragmented forest that are removed from river gateways and primary rim to river travel routes would be managed as backcountry forest (see Table 2.24 and Figure 2.9). The backcountry zones would be managed to protect and restore unfragmented forest blocks largely free of human disturbance and to offer opportunities for visitors to be immersed in nature, relying on non-motorized access.

Frontcountry forest zoning would apply to the remaining forest in the park in the vicinity of river gateways and along primary rim to river travel routes (see Table 2.25 and Figure 2.9). Within these areas large contiguous forest blocks would generally be maintained, although development for visitor use facilities might occur that would cause some forest fragmentation. Visitors would access the frontcountry forest by roads and by trails.

**Riparian Corridor.** No additional areas would be managed as riparian zones in Alternative 4 beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

#### ■ Water Quality Management (Alternative 4)

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 4 related to water quality management beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

**Table 2.24**

New River Gorge National River  
**Alternative 4 – Management Zoning Summary**

Management Zone	Area (acres)
Backcountry	43,509 (60.8%)
Frontcountry	21,470 (30.0%)
River Corridor	5,525 (7.7%)
Historic Resource	599 (0.9%)
Park Development	443 (0.6%)

**Table 2.25**

New River Gorge National River  
**Backcountry Forest Management Zoning in Alternative 4** (see Figure 2.9)

#### **Backcountry Zones Common to Alternatives 2 to 5**

- Fall Branch
- Meadow Creek North
- Glade Creek
- Garden Ground
- Stretcher Neck
- Claremont
- Above Thurmond
- Rush Run
- Sewell
- Endless Wall

#### **Additional Areas Zoned Backcountry in Alternative 4**

- Chestnut Mountain
- Irish Mountain
- Bucklick Branch
- Dowdy Creek
- Terry-Batoff
- Ames
- Marr Branch

#### ■ **Cultural Resource Management (Alternative 4)**

In Alternative 4 cultural resource management actions would focus on treatment and interpretation of:

- representative coal mining, timbering, and railroading resources at or near river gateways at Hinton, Prince, and Thurmond
- representative early settlement/agricultural resources in the southern end of the park
- representative discovery sites along trails at or near river gateways and along rim to river trails (approximately 20 to 25 sites)

#### **Resources in River Gateways and Early Settlement/Agricultural Resources.**

In general, historic structures in river gateways and at the southern end of the park would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused through the NPS historic leasing program for commercial and/or residential uses. Representative structures to be rehabilitated and reused would include farmhouses in the southern end of the park, Prince Brothers General Store, Commercial Row in Thurmond, and houses in Thurmond that remain in good condition. Partners would be sought to assist with rehabilitation. At Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), a variety of management actions would be implemented to treat resources, to tell the story of mining in the gorge, and to provide safe visitor access facilities.

**Discovery Sites.** In Alternative 4 cultural resource management actions would also include stabilization and interpretation of cultural resources as discovery sites (from 20 to 25 sites) (see Section 2.4.5 Cultural Resource Management above). Visitors would come upon and find these sites as they experience the park from trails at or near river gateways and from rim to river trails. Discovery sites would include a variety of cultural resources representative of the different archeological resources, cultural landscapes, historic structures, and ethnographic resources that tell the park's stories.

#### ■ **Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge (Alternative 4)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 4 to protect scenic resources in and around the gorge beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources throughout the park from numerous new rim to river trails and from numerous new trails in the vicinity of river gateways (see Section 2.7.4 below).





#### 2.7.4 Visitor Use and Visitor Facilities (Alternative 4)

##### ■ Hiking and Equestrian Use (Alternative 4)

In addition to the trail system expansion common to Alternatives 2 to 5 and the trail improvements at Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), Alternative 4 would include new park trails to provide rim to river experiences and experiences in and around river gateways. All new trails would generally use existing unmaintained trails.

Possible new trails offering visitors rim to river experiences would include:

- a trail from the Sandstone Visitor Center to Hump Mountain
- a trail from Grandview to Mill Creek
- a trail from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock
- a trail from Trump-Lilly Farm to Richmond-Hamilton Farm
- a trail from Cloverdale Road to the Upper Glade Creek Trail
- a trail from Garden Ground to the New River
- a trail from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (if and when the CSX Corman Line right-of-way is abandoned and acquired by the NPS)
- a trail from GW Carver (via Babcock State Park) to Sewell to Caperton to Keeney Creek (in cooperation with Babcock State Park)
- a trail from the rim to the river along Fire Creek

Possible new trails offering visitors experiences in and around river gateways would include:

- a trail from Terry Beach to Stone Cliff
- a trail from Thurmond to Sewell
- trails in the Highland-Backus area
- a trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain
- a trail to the New River Bridge staging area
- a trail from the Stone Cliff Coke Ovens to Stone Cliff Mine
- a trail to the Beauty Mountain Overlook
- a trail from Keeney Creek Road to Keeney Creek Beach

Trailhead facilities would be provided for all new trails.

Alternative 4 would address the need for additional equestrian trails by providing a new equestrian loop trail in the Bucklick Branch area (with trailhead facilities).

#### ■ **Biking (Alternative 4)**

Alternative 4 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails listed in the preceding section subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 4 possible new biking opportunities would include:

- a new rail trail with biking access from Thurmond to Sewell
- development of a new biking trail in the Highland-Backus frontcountry zone
- development of a new rail trail with biking access from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (if and when the CSX Corman Line right-of-way is abandoned and acquired by the NPS)

#### ■ **Hunting (Alternative 4) (Modified Hunting Program)**

In Alternative 4 hunting would continue largely as it is today. However, the following activities would be phased out over a five-year period:

- hunting of native “pest” species (raccoons, opossums, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, crows, skunks, woodchucks, and weasels)
- use of hunting dogs outside of applicable season for training purposes

In addition the following actions would be implemented:

- the NPS and WV DNR would collaboratively monitor park-specific game harvest and hunter use levels using a voluntary hunter registration/permit process and designated hunt units; this process would include distribution of information to hunters (hunt unit maps, regulations, etc.) and a voluntary end-of-season hunter questionnaire provided by the NPS
- NPS and WV DNR would develop a cooperative game management plan specific to designated hunt units in the park that would also identify management strategies to improve hunter satisfaction and enhance outreach opportunities to both hunters and non-hunters

#### ■ **Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way (Alternative 4)**

In Alternative 4 the NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible. As in Alternative 1 priorities would be to secure legal crossings at locations where visitors currently frequently cross tracks illegally. In addition effort would be focused on securing legal crossings needed for development of the new developed campground at Terry Beach and for a rim to river trail along Fire Creek.

#### ■ **Access and Parking (Alternative 4)**

In Alternative 4 management actions would generally maintain existing patterns of motorized access within the park, while permitting expansion of motorized access for visitors and/or administrative use in park development zones, historic resource

zones, river corridor zones, and frontcountry zones. Almost two-thirds (60.8%) of the park would be zoned backcountry where roads and parking would be limited to zone perimeters (see Figure 2.9) and where only non-motorized access could occur in the zone interior.

In Alternative 4 trailheads would provide adequate parking for visitors at the endpoints of rim to river trails. Similarly trailheads with adequate parking would be provided for new trails offering visitor experiences in and around river gateways. A new park road would be built in the Highland-Backus area providing access to new trails on the plateau and to a new developed campground.

At Cunard existing problems with inadequate parking for private paddlers on peak visitation days would be alleviated by:

- adding parking for private paddlers at Cunard (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- implementing an alternative transportation system (ATS) composed of a concession-based shuttle that would operate on the Cunard Road, picking up and dropping off riders at a satellite parking area on the rim (at the site of the proposed Cunard boundary adjustment); the shuttle would primarily serve private paddlers and other visitors – outfitted paddlers would continue to ride to and from the river access on outfitter-operated buses

In addition the NPS would work cooperatively with the WV DOH to:

- design and construct pullouts on WV SR 41 from Stannaford to McCreery
- design and construct improvements to WV SR 25/2 in Thurmond
- **Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access) (Alternative 4)**

Additional visitor facilities associated with Alternative 4 would include camping, picnicking, and river access facilities located in and around river gateways or in support of rim to river experiences. All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities (common to Alternatives 2 to 5).

In the Meadow Creek River Gateway area:

- a new developed public campground would be developed at Meadow Creek West; in conjunction with this facility there would be an amphitheatre, picnic facilities, and a public river access site, including a river launch (with disabled boater access), parking, comfort/changing stations, and utilities

In the Prince/McCreery River Gateway area:

- a new developed campground and river access would be located at Terry Beach (if and when the required property could be acquired by the NPS from a willing seller)
- improvements to existing primitive campgrounds at Glade Creek, Mill Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Army Camp would add more campsites in the area

In the Thurmond River Gateway area the existing Dun Glen campground would be closed (because of its location in the floodplain) and existing day-use facilities would be rehabilitated.

In the Cunard River Gateway area new picnicking facilities would be added at Brooklyn with parking and pedestrian access to the New River.

In the Canyon Rim/Fayette Station River Gateway area a new developed campground would be located at the existing NPS Burnwood day-use/operations area. This campground would address the need for camping facilities in proximity to rock climbing areas and cultural resource attractions in the lower gorge.

In the Highland-Backus rim area, a new developed campground would be developed.

River access improvements associated with Alternative 4 would include:

- a new access at Meadow Creek West near the Sandstone Visitor Center
- the existing McCreery river access would be closed
- a new river access at Terry Beach (described above)
- at Cunard expansion of existing parking for private paddlers and addition of new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5), as well as implementation of an alternative transportation system at Cunard (see Access and Parking above)

#### **2.7.5 Working with Local Communities (Alternative 4)**

##### **■ Sustaining Communities within the Park (Alternative 4)**

**Hinton.** No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 4 to strengthen the connection between the city, its residents, and the mission of the NPS at the park beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7 above).

**Thurmond.** Thurmond – a river gateway in the north end of the park – would become a major visitor attraction where the railroading story would be told (see Table 2.23). Visitation levels would dramatically increase. Visitor lodging would also likely be made available in restored houses. Visitors would be more likely to

explore areas of the town where private residents live. The permanent residential population would increase as a result of NPS staff living in some restored houses. The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with residents – including NPS staff residents – to address issues associated with living in the historic town.

**Other Communities within the Park.** Collaborative priorities for communities within the park in Alternative 4 are summarized in Table 2.26 below. The collaboration actions referenced in Table 2.26 are described above in the discussion of actions common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7).

#### **2.7.6 Land Protection (Alternative 4)**

##### **■ Land Protection Priorities (Alternative 4)**

In the future the NPS land protection program would focus efforts on the highest priority properties still to be protected in the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). For Alternative 4 the priorities for working with willing sellers of private property would be further refined to focus on acquiring properties that are important to accomplishing the overall concept for the alternative, such as properties that:

- include sites needed for trailheads, trail connections, or recreational sites along rim to river trails and along other new trails offering visitors experiences in and around river gateways
- include a site for a developed campground near the river in the northern end of the park

##### **■ Stewardship of Private Land Remaining within the Park Boundary (Alternative 4)**

In the future the NPS would work cooperatively with the owners of private lands remaining within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship of privately-owned resources and values that are fundamental to the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). In Alternative 4 NPS would further focus the stewardship program on the private lands that are of high priority for protection as noted in Section 2.4.8 above and in the preceding section (Land Protection Priorities).

#### **2.7.7 Partnerships (Alternative 4)**

##### **■ Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors (Alternative 4)**

In the future the NPS would take a number of actions aimed at strengthening the connection between the public and the mission of the NPS at New River Gorge National River (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 4 to enhance local appreciation and understanding of the park beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

**Table 2.26 Alternative 4 – Collaborative Priorities for Communities within the Park\***

		Collaborative Actions by the NPS and Local Communities within the Park									
Community	Alternative 4 Setting	Collaboration Priority	Form Community Partner Group	Provide Technical Assistance to Communities for							
				Developing a Community Vision Plan	Managing Change	Managing Visitor Impacts	Documenting Resources	Obtaining Grants	Managing Invasive Species	Providing Private Sector Visitor Services	Develop NPS Facilities, as Needed
<b>Hinton</b>	a major partner gateway community partly within the park at its southern end; no major existing or new visitor use facilities	<b>1</b>	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
<b>Meadow Creek</b>	a “river gateway” (increased minimum visitor through traffic); Sandstone Visitor Center and numerous new visitor facilities in vicinity	<b>1</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Prince/Quinnimont</b>	a “river gateway” (increased visitor and public through traffic on WV SR 41); numerous existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity; rehabilitate and lease the Prince Brothers General Store; restore the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store and the Prince Estate; work cooperatively with AMTRAK to maintain customer service to Prince and provide interpretation at the Prince Station; provide roadside interpretation along WV Route 41 from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont	<b>1</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Terry</b>	a community near the Prince “River Gateway” (no visitor through traffic); numerous existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity	<b>2</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Thayer</b>	a remote community (unimproved McKendree Road); a few existing visitor facilities in vicinity	<b>3</b>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Backus</b>	on plateau; numerous new visitor facilities in vicinity	<b>3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Highland</b>	on plateau; no existing or new visitor facilities in vicinity	<b>3</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Thurmond</b>	a major “river gateway”; restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures would dramatically increase visitation and the number of residents living in the town	<b>1</b>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 – High Priority    2 – Medium Priority    3 – Low Priority    ✓ - action recommended, as funding allows											

■ **Gateway Community Partnerships (Alternative 4)**

In the future the NPS would expand efforts to work cooperatively with its gateway communities to define and accomplish shared goals (see Section 2.4.9 above). In Alternative 4 partnerships between the NPS and the park's gateway communities would seek to enhance the visitor experience by providing better visitor orientation, by promoting services needed by visitors in gateway communities, by fostering improved wayfinding signage, and by promoting complementary interpretive and recreational experiences at other attractions in southern West Virginia. Small visitor contact facilities and/or information kiosks would provide information on recreation activities, visitor facilities, and interpretive programs at the park as well as at other attractions in the region.

■ **Regional Tourism Partnerships (Alternative 4)**

In the future the NPS would expand its participation in regional economic development planning efforts underway by the various regional planning agencies and organizations in southern West Virginia (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 4 related to NPS participation in these efforts beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

■ **Other Partnerships (Alternative 4)**

In the future the NPS would expand its collaboration with other public agencies and groups – including Babcock and Hawks Nest State Parks, state and county agencies, and organized stakeholder groups (see Section 2.4.9 above). In Alternative 4 the NPS would further increase collaborative efforts with the state parks (for trail development) and with the WV DNR (for development of cooperative game management plan and harvest monitoring).

**2.7.8 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Alternative 4)**

Table 2.27 identifies the desired resource conditions and desired visitor experiences for specific areas of the park in Alternative 4. The area-specific desired conditions focus on fundamental and other important resources and values and the visitor experience opportunities associated with them that would be appropriate in particular locations based on proposed management zoning.

Table 2.27 also identifies the general types of actions in specific areas of the park that would be needed and allowable to achieve desired conditions in Alternative 4. These are examples of the actions needed to move from existing conditions to desired conditions. Identifying the types of needed and allowable changes helps 1) to provide a sense of what management actions might occur and what development might look like in Alternative 4, 2) to identify the impacts of these actions, and 3) to estimate the general costs of implementing the actions.

### 2.7.9 Costs (Alternative 4)

The NPS has prepared estimates of annual operating costs and one-time costs associated with Alternative 4 using NPS and industry cost estimating guidelines (see Table 2.37 in Section 2.14 below). Annual recurring costs include personnel and non-labor costs, such as utilities, vehicles, travel, and supplies. One-time capital investments include construction, exhibits, research and planning. These costs are presented for comparative purposes only and will be refined at a later date based upon final design of facilities and other considerations. Some projects have the potential to be funded through partnerships and volunteers, or through shared funding with other agencies. Therefore, actual costs would vary depending on when specific actions are implemented and on contributions by partners and volunteers.

#### ■ NPS Annual Operating Costs and Staffing Requirements (Alternative 4)

NPS annual operating costs associated with Alternative 4 are estimated to be \$15,570,000 (2009 dollars). This includes the anticipated cost for staff salaries and benefits for 186 full-time equivalent staff, utilities, supplies, leasing (including leased park offices, as in Alternative 4) and other materials needed for park maintenance and operations.

Operating costs for Alternative 4 include the addition of 26 new FTE. The new positions include one new FTE to help develop and manage partnerships with the gateway communities, additional protection rangers to manage and cover new campgrounds, new maintenance staff to maintain and service the new campgrounds, trails and river access/day use facilities and new interpretive staff to expand interpretive programs and service increased visitation as the result of new facilities.

#### ■ NPS One-Time Costs (Alternative 4)

NPS one-time costs associated with Alternative 4 are estimated to be \$29,300,000 (2009 dollars) including one-time facilities costs and non-facilities costs.

Facility costs include projects such as the following:

- rehabilitate the Richmond-Hamilton, Trump-Lilly and Vallandigham farmhouses and the Prince Brothers General Store through the NPS historic leasing program
- rehabilitate two historic houses for temporary housing and 18 for the historic lease program in Thurmond
- rehabilitate Thurmond's commercial row through partnership
- provide new trails for rock climber access
- develop a new campground for rock climbers
- provide two new equestrian trails



- provide new rim to river hiking trails and trailheads at Pinnacle Rock, Beauty Mountain, Upper Glade Creek, Davis Branch, Fire Creek, Garden Ground, Grandview, Hump Mountain, and other areas
- provide a new stacked loop biking trail in a frontcountry area
- provide new improvements to Turkey Spur at Grandview
- provide improvements to parking and circulation at Grandview
- improve Cunard and Fayette Station river access areas to relieve congestion
- expand parking at middle gorge areas such as Glade Creek, McCreery, and Thayer
- provide new roads to access Highland Backus plateau areas and develop new campground
- relocate stone cliff campground from riparian area
- improve day use areas at Dun Glen, McCreery, and Mill Creek
- develop a new camping facility at Meadow Creek West and additional camping south of I-64
- expand existing primitive campgrounds at Glade Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Army Camp
- develop new designated backcountry campsites
- develop new campground with river access at Terry Beach

Non-facility costs include projects such as the following:

- restore the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store and Estate
- develop 20 cultural resources as discovery sites accessible from gateway communities
- pedestrian access across CSX right-of-way at new campgrounds
- develop new scenic vistas
- install and maintain information kiosks at gateway communities
- improve local appreciation and understanding by providing roadside interpretation along seven major roads through gateway communities

Table 2.27 Alternative 4 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Development Areas</b>			
<b>Bass Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bass Lake Campground (private)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 20 from I-64 to Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Sandstone Visitor Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandstone Visitor Center</li> <li>parking, picnicking facilities, and public restrooms</li> <li>NPS operations facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a rim-to-river trail from the Sandstone Visitor Center to Lower Hump Mountain</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek West</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the park</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground</li> <li>offer amphitheatre-based interpretive programs</li> <li>provide a public river access facility including a river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> </ul>
<b>Grandview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day-use facilities (picnicking facilities, recreational facilities, playground, trails, overlooks, restrooms) (high use – demand for picnic shelters exceeds capacity)</li> <li>amphitheatre (used for Theatre West Virginia productions) (needs rehabilitation)</li> <li>visitor contact station (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>main overlook not ADA accessible</li> <li>road system and parking (pedestrian and vehicular circulation issues occur during peak visitation periods)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facilities</li> <li>NPS operations facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a Grandview to Mill Creek rim-to-river trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Terry Beach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McCreery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>demand exceeds capacity during peak visitation periods leading to safety issues and visitor conflicts</li> <li>private paddler safety issues due to pedestrian crossing of WV 41)</li> <li>NPS unable to acquire property needed to relocate parking and address safety issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>Terry Beach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>private river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> <li>conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>close the McCreery river access and restore the site</li> <li>provide a public river access facility at Terry Beach, including a river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> <li>provide a developed campground at Terry Beach</li> <li>provide a trail from Army Camp to Stone Cliff (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Dun Glen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>Dun Glen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day use facilities (picnicking, parking, restrooms)</li> <li>group campground(in floodplain)</li> <li>park operations facility (in remnants of Dun Glen Hotel) (block access to river – functionally obsolete)</li> <li>park housing (dorms) (functionally obsolete)</li> </ul> </li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Corman Spur Line at Southside Junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>management facilities support efficient park operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>close existing campground and restore riparian habitat</li> <li>relocate existing park housing elsewhere in the park</li> <li>rehabilitate day-use facilities (restrooms, picnic shelter, parking, access road)</li> <li>as park operations buildings become functionally obsolete, consider relocating existing park operations functions to Burnwood and demolishing buildings</li> </ul>

Table 2.27 Alternative 4 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Glen Jean (Park Headquarters)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>park headquarters, headquarters annex (Glen Jean Bank), and operations facilities</li> <li>Glen Jean Bank (listed on National Register) (good condition)</li> <li>all structures located within 25-year floodplain</li> <li>park collection facility in Glen Jean Bank (within the floodplain)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpret the Glen Jean Bank</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 25 from Glen Jean to Thurmond</li> </ul>
<b>Cunard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>crowded conditions during most summer weekends, especially when river levels are low</li> <li>inadequate private paddler</li> <li>parking inadequate boat slide capacity</li> <li>limited river access for disabled boaters</li> <li>visitor conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>visitors use a variety of travel modes to access the park and specific visitor use areas</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>during periods of high visitor use provide a concession-based shuttle from satellite parking areas to the river access site</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along the Cunard Access Road from the community of Cunard to the Cunard River access</li> <li>interpret the Cunard tippie and coke ovens</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Fayette Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (parking, picnicking, public restrooms)</li> <li>CSX Main Line (active)</li> <li>visitors (primarily private paddlers) frequently illegally cross the CSX Main Line to reach the river access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience at the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a pedestrian walkway connecting the private boater parking area with the day-use area</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Burnwood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental education based at picnic pavilions (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>Laing Loop Nature Trail</li> <li>park operations facilities (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facility (serving Burnwood and the Canyon Rim Visitor Center) (excess capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground (with connection to existing Burnwood water and wastewater systems)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource Areas</b>			
<b>Richmond Bottom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richmond-Hamilton Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farmhouse (habitable condition), split-log barns (period condition), other outbuildings (period condition)</li> <li>fields not leased for agriculture</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>no interpretive programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Vallandigham Farm               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>log cabin (not habitable), log smokehouse, other outbuildings</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Richmond-Hamilton Farm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>interpret the Richmond-Hamilton Farm site</li> <li>provide access and parking for visitors</li> <li>provide wayfinding signage for a rim to river trail from Richmond-Hamilton to Trump-Lilly</li> </ul> </li> <li>at Vallandigham Farm, rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> </ul>
<b>Trump-Lilly Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farm, outbuildings, farm fields, and orchard</li> <li>excellent example of post-bellum subsistence farmstead in uplands of the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>interpret the Trump-Lilly Farm site</li> <li>provide wayfinding signage for a rim to river trail from Richmond-Hamilton to</li> </ul>

Table 2.27 Alternative 4 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ farmhouse not habitable</li> <li>▪ approximately 10 percent of historic fields are presently open</li> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>▪ views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	Trump-Lilly
<b>Prince Brothers General Store</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ wood-frame store (recently stabilized on exterior)</li> <li>▪ last surviving commercial building of its type along the New River</li> <li>▪ listed on National Register (for its architectural design)</li> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>▪ historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>▪ collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>▪ views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ rehabilitate the Prince Brothers General Store (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>▪ restore the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store</li> </ul>
<b>Thurmond</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ town mostly owned by the NPS, although some houses remain in private ownership and are occupied year-round</li> <li>▪ entire town site included within the Thurmond Historic District (listed on National Register)</li> <li>▪ restored Thurmond Depot (used as NPS visitor center) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>▪ Commercial Row (stabilized on exterior) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>▪ remnants of C&amp;O train yard and passenger depot</li> <li>▪ various frame houses (variable condition – some in poor condition, some recently stabilized on exterior only)</li> <li>▪ vegetation (kudzu) negatively impacted site</li> <li>▪ structures at Commercial row have lead and asbestos contamination</li> <li>▪ inadequate water supply and wastewater treatment systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>▪ historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>▪ collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>▪ views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ rehabilitate commercial row buildings (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>▪ rehabilitate houses that are currently in good condition for reuse for park housing, park dormitory housing, or visitor lodging through the NPS historic leasing program</li> <li>▪ restore other remaining historic structures (on the exterior only)</li> <li>▪ provide a trail from Thurmond to Sewell Trail (including trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor Areas</b>			
<b>Meadow Creek to Quinnimont</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>▪ Glade Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- river access (moderate use)</li> <li>- Glade Creek campground and day-use area (high use) (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> <li>- Glade Creek Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Mill Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- river access (low use)</li> <li>- undesignated camping occurs in floodplain)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at Glade Creek, expand the existing campground</li> <li>▪ at Mill Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide a Grandview to Mill Creek rim-to-river trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>- provide a vault toilet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 2.27 Alternative 4 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no restrooms</li> <li>▪ walk-in camping at Grassy Shoals, Mill Creek, and Royal Pull-Out</li> </ul>		
<b>Quinnimont to Army Camp</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>▪ Grandview Sandbar               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- river access (moderate use)</li> <li>- day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>- campground (high use) (demand frequently exceeds capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Army Camp               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- river access (moderate use)</li> <li>- day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>- campground (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> <li>▪ CSX Piney Creek spur line on river left (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at Army Camp               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expand the existing campground</li> <li>- provide a rim-to-river trail from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ at Grandview Sandbar:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expand the existing campground</li> <li>- interpret the Royal Cemetery</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Stone Cliff to Arbuckle Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stone Cliff               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- river access (high use)</li> <li>- campground and day-use area (in floodplain) (high use)</li> <li>- Stone Cliff Trail and trailhead (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at Stone Cliff, provide a trail from Army Camp to Stone Cliff</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Brooklyn to Hawks Nest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brooklyn               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- undesignated camping (moderate use)</li> <li>- river fishing (no day-use facilities) (moderate use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Teays Landing river access (private)</li> <li>▪ CSX Main Line on river right upstream of Cunard and on river right and river left downstream of Cunard (active)</li> <li>▪ visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Main Line               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to reach the lower railroad area (for fishing and boating)</li> <li>- to reach Short Creek (for camping and fishing)</li> <li>- to reach Kaymoor via the tunnel under the tracks (for hiking)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at Brooklyn, provide new picnicking facilities with parking and pedestrian access to the river</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> <li>▪ work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way in the lower railroad area, at Short Creek, and at Kaymoor</li> </ul>
<b>Forest Areas</b>			
<b>Sewell Mountain (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Big Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a rim to river trail from Trump-Lilly Farm to Richmond-Hamilton Farm</li> </ul>
<b>Chestnut Mountain (Backcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sandstone Overlook – parking demand exceeds capacity</li> <li>▪ Gwinn Ridge Trail provides access for hiking</li> <li>▪ Gwinn Ridge Trailhead – parking demand exceeds capacity</li> <li>▪ Lick Creek - water quality impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide roadside interpretation from I-64 to Hinton</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek South (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meadow Creek – water quality impaired</li> <li>▪ fish stocking in Meadow Creek (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>▪ hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>▪ CSX Meadow Creek rail line (active)</li> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a rim to river trail from the Lower Hump Mountain to the Sandstone Visitor Center</li> <li>▪ provide roadside interpretation along Meadow Creek Road from Meadow Bridge to Meadow Creek</li> </ul>
<b>Bucklick Branch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ hunting area</li> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide an equestrian loop trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Highland-Backus (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River on the gorge wall</li> <li>▪ hunting area</li> <li>▪ no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities is heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a park access road</li> <li>▪ provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- generally in the Highland-Backus area</li> <li>- from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> <li>- Highland Mountain Biking Trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ provide a developed campground in the</li> </ul>

Table 2.27 Alternative 4 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plateau area</li> <li>provide trailheads:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to access new hiking trails</li> <li>to access new biking trails</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Stretcher Neck</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a river-to-rim trail from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock</li> </ul>
<b>Dowdy Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River on the gorge wall</li> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no designated trailheads – two sites with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide several designated backcountry campsite groups along the Dowdy Creek Highland Mountain Trail</li> <li>provide a trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Glade Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>popular hunting and fishing area (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR and Glade-Pinch Trout Association</li> <li>fish stocking in Mill Creek by WV DNR</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail provides fishing access and a connection from the rim to the river (admin vehicles permitted on upper section)</li> <li>Polls Plateau Trail, Kates Plateau Trail and Kates Falls Trail provide access for primitive camping and hunting</li> <li>Lower Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>Upper Glade Creek Trailhead (demand exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Cloverdale Road area used for access to Kates Plateau Trail although no trailhead facilities are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete studies to understand impacts of stocking on native trout fish stocking; continue to support stocking by WV DNR and park partners, if deemed appropriate</li> <li>provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a segment of the rim-to-river trail from Grandview to Mill Creek</li> <li>a trail from Cloverdale Road to Upper Glade Creek Trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide trailheads:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expand parking capacity at the existing Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>provide a trailhead at Cloverdale Road</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Royal</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line (active)</li> <li>Piney Creek - water quality impaired</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 41 from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont</li> </ul>
<b>Terry-Batoff Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line (active)</li> <li>Piney Creek - water quality impaired</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 41 from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont</li> <li>provide a trail from Army Camp to Stone Cliff</li> </ul>
<b>Garden Ground</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stone Cliff Trail (low use)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one plateau site with no developed facilities heavily used for parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a rim-to-river trail from the Garden Ground plateau to the New River</li> <li>a trail from Army Camp to Stone Cliff</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Army Camp to Stone Cliff Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Dunloup Creek</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River at the river level</li> <li>Thurmond-Minden Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Dunloup Creek by WV DNR (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>CSX Corman spur line (active)</li> <li>recurring flooding along Dunloup Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if and when the CSX Corman Line is abandoned provide a rail/trail from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Mt. Hope to Southside Junction Rail/Trail</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 25 from Glen Jean to Thurmond</li> </ul>
<b>Arbuckle Creek</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thurmond-Minden Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>Arbuckle Creek – impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide roadside interpretation from Minden to the Thurmond-Minden Trail Trailhead</li> </ul>

Table 2.27 Alternative 4 – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Rush Run</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brooklyn Mine Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>▪ Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>▪ Cunard Access Road</li> <li>▪ Cunard Trailhead parking area</li> <li>▪ provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide roadside interpretation along the Cunard Access Road from the community of Cunard to the Cunard River access</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Above Thurmond</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River near the river level</li> <li>▪ hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>▪ no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking</li> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a trail from the Stone Cliff coke ovens to Stone Cliff Mine</li> </ul>
<b>Below Thurmond</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a trail from Thurmond to Sewell</li> </ul>
<b>Sewell</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ hunting area (plateau above Fire Creek, Ephraim Creek, Mann Creek, and Keeney Creek)</li> <li>▪ no NPS facilities</li> <li>▪ partially included within Babcock State Park (facilities include trails)</li> <li>▪ fish stocking in Glade Creek and Mann Creek by WV DNR (moderate use)</li> <li>▪ provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>▪ rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ mutual park management goals are effectively realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a trail from Thurmond to Sewell</li> <li>▪ provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) from GW Carver (via Babcock State Park) to Sewell to Caperton to Keeney Creek (in cooperation with Babcock State Park)</li> <li>▪ provide a rim-to-river trail along Fire Creek (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>▪ block ATV access to Cunard across the New River railroad bridge</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.11))</li> </ul>
<b>Babcock State Park</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Babcock State Park (facilities include cabins, campground, Glade Creek Grist Mill, swimming beach, boat rentals, picnic facilities, trails, horseback riding concession)</li> <li>▪ fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ mutual park management goals are effectively realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) from GW Carver (via Babcock State Park) to Sewell to Caperton to Keeney Creek (in cooperation with Babcock State Park)</li> </ul>
<b>Beauty Mountain</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beauty Mountain climbing area</li> <li>▪ Beauty Mountain overlook (no designated trail)</li> <li>▪ provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>▪ rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 85/2 from Lookout to Winona to Nuttallburg</li> <li>▪ provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) to the Beauty Mountain overlook</li> <li>▪ provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) to Keeney Creek Beach (including a CSX crossing)</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Sunshine Buttress</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>▪ New River Bridge Trail (low use)</li> <li>▪ Sunshine Buttress climbing area (low use)</li> <li>▪ no designated trails to climbing routes at the top or base of Sunshine Buttress</li> <li>▪ provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>▪ rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) to the New River Bridge staging area</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Ames</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>▪ Bridge Buttress climbing area (high use)</li> <li>▪ Bridge Buttress parking area</li> <li>▪ Bubba City climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>▪ Junkyard climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>▪ no designated trails to climbing routes at Bubba City or Junkyard</li> <li>▪ provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>▪ rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide road access to the Junkyard climbing area</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>

## **2.8 Alternative 5 – Exploration Experiences (Preferred Alternative)**

### **2.8.1 Overall Management Concept (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

Alternative 5 would preserve areas for primitive recreational experiences from end to end of the park (see Figure 2.10).<sup>1</sup> Interspersed with these primitive areas would be cultural and interpretive resource focal areas where visitors could explore communities and other places that once populated the gorge, experience the river, and enjoy a variety of recreational experiences. A north-south through the park connector composed of improved scenic roads and trails would enable visitors to travel the length of the park, visiting these areas and accessing the backcountry. Partnerships with gateway communities and improved rim to river experiences would foster links to the park as a whole and to specific cultural and interpretive resource areas within the parks. Other connecting trails outside the park – made possible through partnerships – would offer visitors an opportunity to hike or bike from New River Gorge National River to the Bluestone National Scenic River, the Gauley River National Recreation Area, and other attractions in the region.

### **2.8.2 Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

#### **■ Experiencing the Park (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**





Alternative 5 would emphasize a combination of primitive outdoor experiences in the park's forest complemented by diverse opportunities for visitors in and around specific focal areas (see Figure 2.10). Backcountry forest in much of the park would offer the most primitive outdoor experiences where visitors would be immersed in nature with few modern conveniences, while frontcountry forest would offer a broad variety of less primitive recreational experiences, such as family activities, biking and equestrian use. In contrast, five focal areas would make available to visitors concentrated opportunities for cultural, natural, scenic, interpretive, and recreation experiences in specific areas of the park. The historic context for each focal area would define the stories that would be told, focusing as appropriate on the park's early settlement/agricultural or industrial themes. A river gateway within each focal area would be the location where visitors would learn about the resources and recreation opportunities. From river gateways visitors would move out into the broader focal area and the park on the water by boat, on trails by foot or bicycle, or on scenic roads. The new through park connector would enable visitors to explore the park from end-to-end. It would also connect focal areas and provide expanded access to cultural resources, scenic vistas, and natural features within the forest. As visitors explore the park on the through park connector and other new trails they would learn about the park's history when they come upon cultural resource "discovery sites" where interpretive media would tell the park's stories.

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<sup>1</sup> See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 above for a general comparison of the alternative concepts and a summary of the broad organizing principles for each alternative

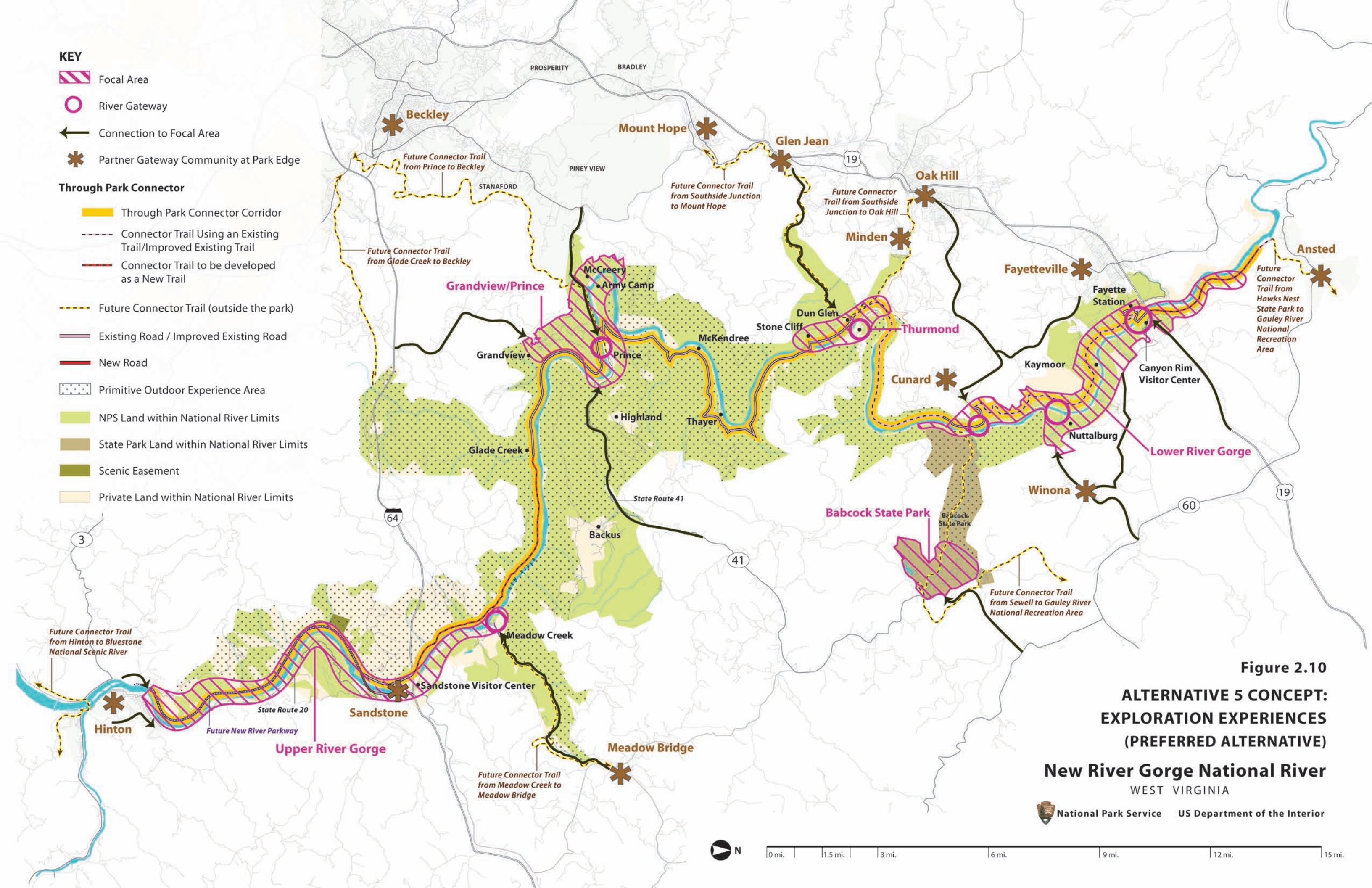


# KEY

-  Focal Area
-  River Gateway
-  Connection to Focal Area
-  Partner Gateway Community at Park Edge

## Through Park Connector

-  Through Park Connector Corridor
-  Connector Trail Using an Existing Trail/Improved Existing Trail
-  Connector Trail to be developed as a New Trail
-  Future Connector Trail (outside the park)
-  Existing Road / Improved Existing Road
-  New Road
-  Primitive Outdoor Experience Area
-  NPS Land within National River Limits
-  State Park Land within National River Limits
-  Scenic Easement
-  Private Land within National River Limits



**Figure 2.10**  
**ALTERNATIVE 5 CONCEPT:**  
**EXPLORATION EXPERIENCES**  
**(PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)**

**New River Gorge National River**  
 WEST VIRGINIA

 National Park Service  US Department of the Interior



Partnerships between the NPS and the park's gateway communities would seek to enhance the park experience by providing better visitor orientation, by promoting services needed by visitors in gateway communities, by fostering improved wayfinding signage, and by promoting complementary interpretive and recreational experiences at other attractions in southern West Virginia.

Table 2.28 provides an overview of potential visitor experiences in various places in the park. Table 2.28 also summarizes management actions in Alternative 5 that would define where and how visitors would enjoy the important experiences that they may have at New River Gorge National River, including:

- appreciating life in the gorge – the human history story
- appreciating/experiencing the wildness of the landscape
- experiencing the power of the river
- experiencing scenic beauty

Visitors would also continue to enjoy the classic park experiences at Sandstone Falls, Grandview, Thurmond, Endless Wall, Canyon Rim, and Fayette Station Road; new management actions consistent with the overall concept for Alternative 5 would enhance the visitor experience at Sandstone Falls, Thurmond, and Fayette Station Road.

#### ■ **Visitor Orientation (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

Visitor orientation would focus on describing opportunities for recreation and for exploring the park along the through park connector and on roads and trails within the five focal areas. Emphasis would also be on potential primitive recreational experiences and on rim to river trails, within and near river gateways, and along new trails emanating from river gateways. Visitors would learn about recreation opportunities, places where they can discover the park's significant natural and cultural resources, and the areas where different recreation activities would be possible.

New park brochures and informational materials would describe the through park connector, the park's focal areas, rim to river experiences, and river gateways. They would also emphasize connections to other trails outside the park, such as trails to the Gauley River National Recreation Area.

Visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Sandstone would continue as the primary venues where visitor orientation would occur. From these locations visitors would be directed to the through park connector, focal areas, rim to river trails, and river gateways. Working collaboratively with WV DOH, the park would seek to place signage along public roads directing visitors to rim to river trails and river gateways as they leave visitor centers and as they approach the park from US 19, US 60, I-64, and WV SR 41.

**Table 2.28 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

<b>Places Where Visitors Would Generally Experience the Park in Alternative 5</b>	
<b>Through Park Connector</b>	The through park connector would unify the park, providing visitors the opportunity to explore the park from one end to the other as a multi-day backpacking or biking trip. Alternatively visitors could explore the park on the through park connector in a series of day trips originating from trailheads throughout the park.
<b>Primitive Outdoor Experience Area</b>	The Primitive Outdoor Experience Area would encompass much of the park's forest from end to end of the park, including both backcountry and frontcountry areas. Visitors have opportunities to experience wildness, solitude, adventure, exploration, and discovery. Recreation would be unstructured and trail-based. When in backcountry areas visitors would be immersed in nature, away from modern conveniences. When in frontcountry areas visitors would be in contact with nature but fairly close to modern conveniences.
<b>Upper River Gorge Focal Area</b>	The Upper River Gorge Focal Area would encompass the river corridor in the southern end of the park from Hinton to Meadow Creek. Visitors would learn about early settlement and farming history at a representative restored farmhouse in the New River Parkway corridor (existing River Road corridor). From New River Parkway (now River Road) and from improved recreation sites along the parkway and at Sandstone Falls, visitors would have opportunities to view the river, learn about the park's natural resources, and picnic. New hiking and biking trails would enable visitors to explore the park's forest and to visit the restored farmsteads on foot or by bicycle. Opportunities for camping would be available at two new developed campgrounds.
<b>Grandview/Prince Focal Area</b>	The Grandview/Prince Focal Area would encompass the area from the rim to the river on river left from Grandview to Terry Beach, as well as the river corridor area from Quinimont to Prince on river right. Prince would serve as a river gateway (see below) where visitors would be oriented to the area and the park's railroading and lumbering stories would be told at rehabilitated historic structures and at cultural resource "discovery sites". Visitors could explore the park on a variety of new trails, including the through park connector and rim to river trails from Grandview to Mill Creek and from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock. Access to the river would be enhanced by replacement of the McCreery river access with a new river access at Terry Beach. Camping opportunities would be enhanced by expansion of existing primitive campgrounds and development of a new developed campground at Terry Beach.
<b>Thurmond Focal Area</b>	The Thurmond Focal Area would encompass the river corridor from Stone Cliff through Thurmond. Thurmond would be a river gateway (see below) as well as a major visitor attraction where the railroading story would be told (see Classic Park Experiences below). Visitors would continue to have opportunities for camping at Stone Cliff and for picnicking at the river at both Stone Cliff and Dun Glen. Visitors could explore the park from Southside Junction where a trailhead would be provided for the through park connector as well as from trails from Thurmond to Sewell and from Thurmond to other cultural resource "discovery sites". Visitors would be able to stay overnight in lodging provided in rehabilitated historic buildings operated through the historic leasing or concessions program. Commercial services would also be available in rehabilitated historic buildings.
<b>Babcock State Park Focal Area</b>	The Babcock State Park Focal Area would encompass the southern portion Babcock State Park. NPS would work in partnership with the state park to ensure that national park visitors know about and include Babcock in their visit to the area. Visitors would continue to have a traditional park experience at Babcock offered by the state, including developed recreation activities such as camping, hiking, biking, swimming, and learning about the park's natural resources and cultural resources.
<b>Industrial Gorge Focal Area</b>	The Lower Gorge Focal Area would encompass the river corridor and Endless Wall area in the northern end of the park from above Cunard to Hawks Nest State Park. Visitors would learn about the gorge's industrial history related to mining, lumbering, and railroading. River gateways would be located at Cunard, Nuttallburg, and Fayette Station. An expanded network of trails would enhance access to cultural resource "discovery sites" in remote forested areas.

**Table 2.28 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

<b>Places Where Visitors Would Generally Experience the Park in Alternative 5 (continued)</b>	
<b>River Gateways</b>	River gateways would be places within the park's focal areas where visitors would be oriented to the focal area and from which they would move out into the park via trails, roads, and/or the river. At river gateways visitors would learn about recreation activities and the opportunities in the vicinity to explore the park and to experience its resources and history. Visitor facilities – such as river accesses, trailheads, day-use areas, scenic vistas, and campgrounds – would be clustered in or very near river gateways. Historic resources would be rehabilitated for visitor use. Some river gateways would offer commercial services for visitors, such as lodging, food service, grocery stores, sport shops, and guide service.
<b>Partner Gateway Communities</b>	Partner gateway communities would include the communities adjoining or near the park where visitors arrive from outside the region, where many stay while visiting the park, and where many receive initial orientation to the area. Small visitor contact facilities and/or information kiosks would provide information on recreation activities, visitor facilities, and interpretive programs at New River Gorge as well as at other attractions in the region. Gateway communities would typically offer commercial services for visitors – varying from a full range of services in larger gateways to very limited services in smaller gateways. Gateway communities and the NPS would enter into cooperative partnerships to ensure that both parties would benefit from one another's actions to protect park resources, to enhance the visitor experience, and to generally contribute to the park's position as a major tourist attraction in the region.
<b>Rim to River Trails and Roads</b>	Rim to river experiences would occur along roads and trails that connect plateau areas above the rim to the river below. Traveling these routes by vehicle, foot, or bicycle, visitors could appreciate the wildness of the park, its beauty, and the power of the river evidenced by the rugged terrain and the depth of the gorge. Waysides along rim to river trails and cultural resource "discovery sites" would tell the park's stories. Many rim to river roads and trails would begin at the park's gateway communities and would end at its river gateways.
<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 5)</i>	
<b>Appreciate life in the gorge – the human history story</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park there are cultural resource sites where human history stories could be told.</b></p> <p><u>Visitors to the park's river gateways and focal areas would have opportunities to learn about life in the gorge by visiting rehabilitated cultural resources that are leased through the NPS historic leasing program.</u></p> <p><u>In the Upper River Corridor Focal Area visitors would learn about early Appalachian settlement by visiting historic farms where interpretive programs and exhibits would be available. The farmhouses would be restored to period condition and set within restored cultural landscapes.</u></p> <p><u>In the Grandview/Prince Focal Area visitors would learn about life in a railroading and lumbering town at the rehabilitated Prince Brothers General Store and other nearby sites.</u></p> <p><u>In the Lower Gorge Focal Area visitors would:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>learn about life in a railroading town during the park's industrial era at the Thurmond River Gateway (see Classic Experiences above).</u></li> <li>- learn about life in a mining town during the park's industrial era at the Nuttallburg River Gateway where mining structures and town ruins would be stabilized (as in Alternative 1).</li> </ul> <p>Visitors would also learn about the history of life in the gorge when they come upon and find cultural resources discovery sites <u>along the through park connector, along trails at or near river gateways, and along rim to river trails (approximately 30 to 35 sites).</u></p>

Table 2.28      Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)

Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued) <small>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 5)</small>	
Appreciate/experience the wildness of the landscape	<p><b>A sense of wildness dominates the landscape setting in most areas of the park.</b></p> <p>Blocks of intact and unfragmented forest along most of the length of the park on one or both sides of the river would be managed as backcountry forest, preserving their wild character and enhancing the perception of the park's wildness as visitors experience the park. <u>Overall, backcountry forest blocks would compose approximately 66.4 percent of the park.</u></p> <p>While paddling the river visitors would be transported to remote and wild areas in the upper, middle, and lower gorge, relying on the existing network of river accesses which take possible a variety of paddling experiences in a wild landscape setting. <u>Addition of a new river access in the Upper Gorge Focal Area near the Meadow Creek River Gateway would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips in the middle gorge. In the Prince/McCreery River Gateway replacement of the McCreery river access with a new river access at Terry Beach would facilitate private paddlers safely accessing the river for trips in the middle gorge. New access to the river might also be added in the Lower Gorge Focal Area at Surprise, in the event that transportation system improvements at Cunard do not adequately alleviate crowding at the existing Cunard river access.</u></p> <p>Visitors venturing into the park's forest would explore the park making their way along a greatly expanded network of trails at times near the water's edge and at times looking into the gorge. <u>Over time, and as property and rights-of-way are acquired, NPS would seek to develop trails on both river right and river left, from the new New River Parkway Bridge to Hawks Nest. These trails would connect and provide a loop trail that would provide for several days of hiking in the park. The loop trail would ultimately utilize existing bench roads, rim-top trails, and river level roads, and provide a variety of hiking experiences. Camping along the route would be facilitated so that people could enjoy multi-day hikes in the park.</u></p> <p><u>Initially a new through park connector would enable visitors to travel the length of the park: while a few connector segments would follow scenic roads, it would still provide an opportunity for multi-day backpacking trips. Other new trails would offer visitors rim to river hiking experiences at numerous locations throughout the park. New trails would also offer visitors hiking experiences at numerous locations in and around river gateways.</u></p> <p>Exploration of the park by bicycle – pending adoption of a special regulation and subject to a development of a trail management plan – would occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones and would occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones. <u>Bikers could also explore the park on new stacked loop biking trails in the Bucklick Branch and Craig Branch areas. Visitors could also explore the park by horseback in the Bucklick Branch area and in the Chestnut Mountain area.</u></p> <p>Visitors camping in the forest would experience nature and the sense of solitude that comes from spending extended time in the outdoors at existing campsites <u>and at new camping facilities, including:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <u>in the Upper River Corridor Focal Area, a new developed campground at the river's edge</u></li><li>- <u>in the Prince/McCreery River Focal Area, 1) a new developed campground at Terry Beach, and 2) expansions to existing campgrounds</u></li><li>- <u>in the Lower Gorge Focal Area, a new developed campground on the plateau</u></li></ul> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls expansive vistas of rugged terrain, dense forest, and the turbulent river in the gorge below would evoke appreciation of the wild landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evoking a sense of wildness would be added along rim to river trails and in trails near river gateways.</u></p>

**Table 2.28 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

<b>Important Park Experiences That Visitors Would Have (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 5)</i>	
<b>Experience the power of the river</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park the power of the river is evident wherever visitors can be on the river, be at the river's edge, or view the river from afar.</b></p> <p>The New River would carry paddlers along its freeflowing course through the gorge cut by its waters deep in the Appalachian Plateau. Those who ride the river as it descends through the gorge would feel its power and experience the thrill of adventure and discovery as the water flows turbulently over and amidst massive boulders transported through time from the cliff walls above. River experiences would be available from the existing network of river accesses for paddlers of all skill levels during most spring, summer, and fall months. <u>Addition of a new river access in the Upper Gorge Focal Area near the Meadow Creek River Gateway would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips in the middle gorge. In the Prince/McCreery River Gateway addition of a new river access at Terry Beach would reduce crowding at the McCreery river access and facilitate private paddlers safely accessing the river for trips in the middle gorge. New access to the river might also be added in the Lower Gorge Focal Area at Surprise, in the event that transportation system improvements at Cunard do not adequately alleviate crowding at the existing Cunard river access.</u></p> <p>At the river's edge visitors could see, smell, and hear the river, feeling its power as they sense around them the scale of the gorge shaped by the flowing water. From the existing network of river accesses and day-use areas at the river's edge visitors would experience the river as it flows calmly yet powerfully on its course northward; elsewhere visitors would experience a wild river flowing turbulently around rocks and boulders. In Upper Gorge Focal Area, the river's edge experience would be enhanced in the River Road corridor by day-use area improvements included in the New River Parkway project (as in Alternative 1) <u>and by addition of a new river access at Meadow Creek West. In the Grandview/Prince Focal Area a new river access at Terry Beach would enhance access to the river's edge in the Prince River Gateway area. In the Lower Gorge Focal Area enhancements to the Brooklyn River access would enhance access to the river's edge in the Cunard River Gateway Area.</u></p> <p>From existing developed overlooks and a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls the depth of the gorge, the exposed cliff walls, and the massive boulders in the river below, would evidence the river's power to shape the landscape (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for views evidencing the river's power to shape the landscape would be added along rim to river trails and along trails near river gateways.</u></p>
<b>Experience scenic beauty</b>	<p><b>Throughout the park its scenic beauty is evident from roads, trails, overlooks, and the river.</b></p> <p>From existing roads visitors would have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. <u>In the middle of the park opportunities to experience the scenic quality of the park's landscape would be enhanced through cooperation with the WV DOH aimed at making improvements to McKendree Road, designating the road as a state scenic backway, and establishing the road as segment of the new through park connector.</u> Also, in the Upper Gorge Focal Area, as visitors travel New River Parkway (existing River Road) from Sandstone to Hinton the scenic beauty of the park would be evident in the dramatic landscape visible from the New River Bridge and along the parkway (as in Alternative 1). Also, in the Lower Gorge Focal Area, efforts would be made to enhance opportunities for scenic vistas along Fayette Station Road by working with WV DOH to add pull-outs (as in Alternative 1).</p> <p>Visitors traveling on existing trails would continue to have scenic views of the park's forest, streams, and rugged landforms, with occasional glimpses of the river. <u>Visitors would also enjoy the park's scenic resources from the new through park connector, rim to river trails, and new trails near river gateways.</u></p> <p>Visitors would continue to have panoramic scenic views of the park's landscape from existing developed overlooks and from a new developed overlook at Brooks Falls (as in Alternative 1). <u>New opportunities for panoramic scenic views would be added along rim to river trails and along trails near river gateways.</u></p>

**Table 2.28 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

<b>Classic Park Experiences</b> ( <i>underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 5</i> )	
<b>Paddling the New River</b>	Paddlers would continue to experience the power of the river and the park's wild character and natural beauty as they float the river, stopping to picnic, fish, visit natural and cultural sites of interest, and/or camp. <u>Opportunities for paddlers of all skill levels would be enhanced by addition of a new river access in the middle of the park (at Meadow Creek West) that would expand opportunities for new fishing float trips, family float trips, and beginning paddler float trips.</u> If needed to address capacity issues at Cunard, addition of a <u>new river access at Surprise would enhance outfitted paddler trip logistics and the overall river experience in the lower gorge on peak visitation days and during low flow periods by reducing congestion on the river and by extending the length of full-day outfitted paddler trips.</u> Addition of a <u>new river access at Surprise would also increase visitor access along that road for camping and fishing and allow the improvement of several recreation sites upstream of Brooklyn by providing restrooms and formalized trail access.</u> Several recreation sites along Glade Creek Road (Royal Pullout, Mill Creek, Grassy Shoals) <u>would be enhanced by adding vehicle parking, formalized trail access, and restrooms.</u> Opportunities for disabled paddlers would be enhanced by addition of disabled boater access at the Cunard and McCreery (Terry Beach) river accesses (in Alternatives 2 to 5). The condition of river recreation sites popular for river lunch stops, camping, and fishing would be enhanced by improving access and providing restroom facilities where practicable (in Alternatives 2 to 5). More frequent river patrols would provide visitor education and, as needed, increased enforcement of existing regulations related to group size, trash removal, and human waste removal where restrooms are not available (in Alternatives 2 to 5).
<b>Sandstone Falls</b>	The boardwalk and recreational facilities at Sandstone would continue to bring visitors to the water's edge where they can feel the power of the river, experience its beauty, and learn about the park's significant natural resources (as in Alternative 1). <u>The visitor experience would be enhanced by expansion of the existing boardwalk.</u>
<b>Sandstone Falls Visitor Center</b>	At the Sandstone Falls Visitor Center visitors would continue to be oriented to the park <u>with an emphasis on the combination of primitive outdoor experiences in the park's forest complemented by diverse opportunities for visitors in and around specific focal areas (see Section 2.8.2 above).</u>
<b>Grandview</b>	Social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities at Grandview would continue in a setting where visitors can experience the scenic beauty of the park, the wildness of its landscape, and the power of the river (as in Alternative 1). Park visitors would enjoy safer access to the Turkey Spur overlook (as in Alternative 1). Theatre goers would continue to enjoy productions at an updated Cliffside Amphitheatre (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Kaymoor and Nuttallburg</b>	<u>Nuttallburg would be highlighted as a river gateway in the north end of the park where the park's industrial story would be told.</u> Trails would provide visitor access to historic mining areas at Kaymoor and Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1). Nationally significant mining resources at Nuttallburg would be interpreted for visitors and made more accessible through parking and trail improvements (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Thurmond</b>	Thurmond would become a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where the railroading story would be told. Contamination at Commercial Row structures would be remediated (as in Alternative 1) <u>and the buildings rehabilitated so that commercial activities can return to the town (through the park's leasing program).</u> <u>The town would be home to some NPS staff that would live in rehabilitated historic houses.</u> <u>Visitors might also be able to stay in the town in lodging made available in rehabilitated historic houses.</u> Historic buildings that are not rehabilitated would be stabilized and restored on the exterior only.
<b>Experiencing the Cliffs</b>	The massive sandstone cliffs in the Endless Wall area and elsewhere would continue to attract visitors seeking to experience their beauty as well as the thrill of adventure, exploration, and solitude of rock climbing (as in Alternative 1). Access to the Endless Wall would be made easier and safer by adding parking and by establishing designated and maintained trails to climbing routes (in Alternatives 2 to 5). Climbing and other visitor activities in the Endless Wall area would also be limited to day use (in Alternatives 2 to 5).

**Table 2.28 Important Visitor Experiences (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

<b>Classic Park Experiences (continued)</b> <i>(underlined elements are additions included in Alternative 5)</i>	
<b>Canyon Rim</b>	At Canyon Rim visitors would continue to be oriented to the park at the visitor center <u>with an emphasis on the combination of primitive outdoor experiences in the park's forest complemented by diverse opportunities for visitors in and around specific focal areas (see Section 2.8.2 above).</u> Visitors would continue to have opportunities to view the river and the gorge from existing overlooks (as in Alternative 1).
<b>Fayette Station Road</b>	Fayette Station Road would continue to be a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where visitors would experience the historic travel route across the river, learn about the park's industrial heritage, view the river, and feel its power (as in Alternative 1). Improvements to Fayette Station Road and parking facilities, as well as implementation of shuttle service during periods of high visitor use, would make for a safer visitor experience with more opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources and with fewer opportunities for visitor conflicts (in Alternatives 2 to 5). <u>A new day use area adjacent to the river would increase opportunities for visitors to experience the river and to watch paddlers as they emerge from the river at the end their float trip through the gorge.</u>

Visitor orientation would also occur at partner gateway communities and in river gateways. Information about the park would be available at small visitor contact facilities and/or kiosks.

### 2.8.3 Resource Management (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)

#### ■ Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)

**Resource Stewardship Strategies.** The management strategies shown in Table 2.12 are the actions that the NPS would implement to achieve and maintain over time desired natural resource conditions. The strategies address the management issues challenging the park relevant to maintaining natural processes and restoring natural systems. Implementation of these strategies would be common to Alternatives 2 to 5.

**Unfragmented Forest.** In Alternative 5 blocks of intact and unfragmented forest would extend along most of the length of the park on one or both sides of the river (see Table 2.30 and Figure 2.11). The backcountry zones would be managed to protect and restore unfragmented forest blocks largely free of human disturbance and to offer opportunities for visitors to be immersed in nature, relying on non-motorized access.

Frontcountry forest zoning would generally apply to locations where visitor activities would be concentrated. In frontcountry areas large contiguous forest blocks would generally be maintained, although development for visitor use facilities might occur that would cause limited forest fragmentation. Visitors would access the frontcountry forest by roads and by trails.

**Table 2.29**

New River Gorge National River  
**Alternative 5 – Management  
Zoning Summary**

<b>Management Zone</b>	<b>Area (acres)</b>
Backcountry	47,541 (66.4%)
Frontcountry	17,438 (24.4%)
River Corridor	5,525 (7.7%)
Historic Resource	599 (0.9%)
Park Development	443 (0.6%)



**Table 2.30**

New River Gorge National River  
**Backcountry Forest  
 Management Zoning in  
 Alternative 5** (see Figure 2.10)

**Backcountry Zones Common to  
 Alternatives 2 to 5**

- Fall Branch
- Meadow Creek North
- Glade Creek
- Garden Ground
- Stretcher Neck
- Claremont
- Above Thurmond
- Rush Run
- Sewell
- Endless Wall

**Additional Areas Zoned Backcountry  
 in Alternative 5**

- Sewell Mountain
- Irish Mountain
- Highland-Backus
- Dowdy Creek
- Substation
- Below Thurmond
- Beauty Mountain

**Riparian Corridor.** No additional areas would be managed as riparian zones in Alternative 5 beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

**Water Quality Management (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 5 related to water quality management beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

■ **Cultural Resource Management (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In Alternative 5 public outreach and educational efforts will be emphasized within the cultural and interpretive resource focal areas to increase the public's awareness of and appreciation for these valuable resources. Cultural resource management actions would focus on treatment and interpretation of:

- representative coal, timbering, and railroading resources at or near river gateways at Thurmond, Grandview/Prince, and Hinton
- representative early settlement/agricultural resources in the southern end of the park
- representative discovery sites along the through park connector, trails at or near river gateways, and along rim to river trails

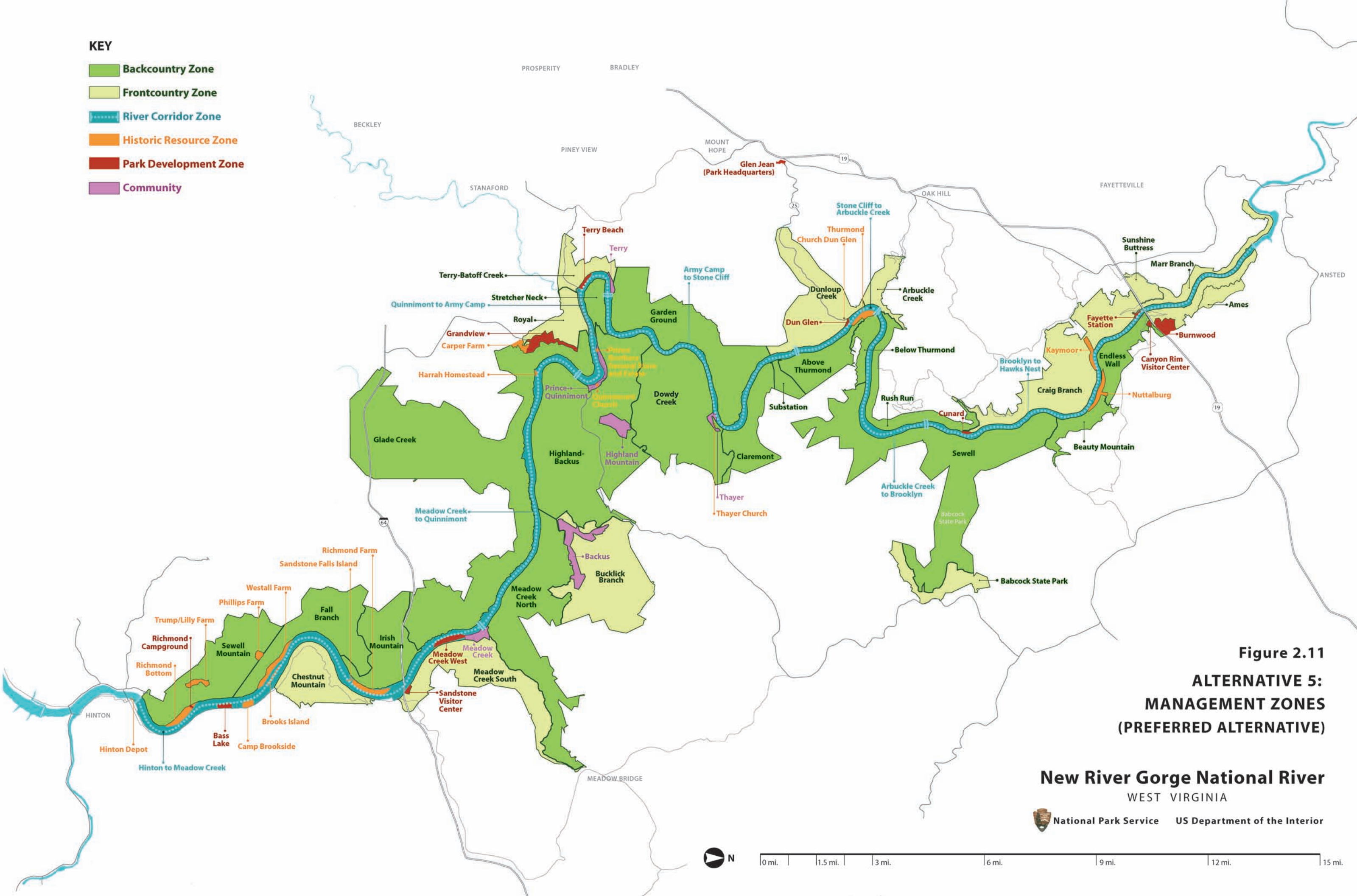
**Resources in River Gateways.** In general, historic structures in river gateways would be restored or rehabilitated and adaptively reused through the NPS historic leasing program for commercial and/or residential uses. Representative structures to be rehabilitated and reused would include Prince Brothers General Store, Commercial Row in Thurmond, and houses in Thurmond that remain in good condition. Partners would be sought to assist with rehabilitation. At Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), a variety of management actions would be implemented to treat resources, to tell the story of mining in the gorge, and to provide safe visitor access facilities.

**Early Settlement/Agricultural Resources.** Cultural resources in the southern end of the park would generally be managed to tell the park's early settlement/agricultural stories. The following actions would be implemented:

- one representative farmhouse would be restored
- other representative farmhouses would be rehabilitated and leased through the park's leasing program
- the cultural landscape associated with restored farmhouses (farm fields, fence lines, and orchards) would be restored
- as properties in the Richmond Bottom and Westfall Farm areas are acquired the cultural landscape would be rehabilitated

**KEY**

-  Backcountry Zone
-  Frontcountry Zone
-  River Corridor Zone
-  Historic Resource Zone
-  Park Development Zone
-  Community



**Figure 2.11**  
**ALTERNATIVE 5:**  
**MANAGEMENT ZONES**  
**(PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)**

- interpretative media would be installed
- some farm fields would be planted in warm season grasses and managed to encourage open land birds

**Discovery Sites.** In Alternative 5 cultural resource management actions would also include stabilization and interpretation of cultural resources as discovery sites (from 30 to 35 sites) (see Section 2.4.5 Cultural Resource Management above). Visitors would come upon and find these sites as they experience the park from the through park connector, trails at or near river gateways, and from rim to river trails. Discovery sites would include a variety of cultural resources representative of the different archeological resources, cultural landscapes, historic structures, and ethnographic resources that tell the park's stories.

**Camp Brookside.** Also in the southern end of the park, at Camp Brookside the NPS would work in partnership with an educational institution to rehabilitate camp buildings for adaptive reuse for education purposes or for use as a youth training camp.

#### ■ **Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge (Alternative 5)**

No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 5 to protect scenic resources in and around the gorge beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.5 above).

Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources throughout the park from the new through park connector, from numerous new rim-to river trails, and from numerous new trails in the vicinity of river gateways (see Section 2.8.4 below).

### **2.8.4 Visitor Use and Visitor Facilities (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

#### ■ **Hiking and Equestrian Use (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In addition to the trail system expansion common to Alternatives 2 to 5 and the trail improvements at Nuttallburg (as in Alternative 1), Alternative 5 would provide trails offering visitors opportunities to explore the park's cultural resources and to have a variety of recreation experiences in the park's frontcountry and backcountry.

Initially hikers would be able to travel from end to end of the park, generally at or near the river – on a new through park connector. A few segments would be scenic roads, making it possible for visitors unable to hike or bike to explore some of the remote areas of the park. The through park connector would generally be composed of the following segments (from upstream to downstream) (see Figure 2.10):

- New River Parkway (existing River Road) – from Brooklin (near Hinton) to the new New River Parkway bridge
- a new trail from the new New River Parkway bridge to the Glade Creek Campground
- existing Glade Creek Road from the Glade Creek Campground to WV SR 41 and WV SR 41/8 – from Glade Creek Road to Terry
- existing WV SR 41 and McKendree Road from Glade Creek Road to Southside Junction
- existing trails and administrative roads from Southside Junction to the Bridge Trailhead (at Fayette Station Road)
- existing Fayette Station Road from the Bridge Trailhead to a new trailhead at Teays Landing
- new trail from a new trailhead at Teays Landing to Hawks Nest State Park

Over time, and as property and rights-of-way are acquired, NPS would seek to develop trails on both river right and river left, from the new New River Parkway Bridge to Hawks Nest. These trails would connect and provide a loop trail that would provide for several days of hiking in the park. The loop trail would ultimately utilize existing bench roads, rim-top trails, and river level roads, and provide a variety of hiking experiences. Camping along the route would be facilitated so that people could enjoy multi-day hikes in the park.

In addition to the trail system expansion common to Alternatives 2 to 5, Alternative 5 would include new park trails to provide rim to river experiences and experiences in and around river gateways. All new trails would generally use existing unmaintained trails.

Possible new trails offering visitors rim to river experiences would include:

- a loop trail connecting Richmond-Hamilton Farm, Vallandingham Farm, Trump-Lilly Farm, and Phillips Farm
- a trail from the Sandstone Visitor Center to Hump Mountain
- a trail from Grandview to Mill Creek
- a trail from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock
- a trail from Cloverdale Road to the Upper Glade Creek Trails
- a trail from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (if and when the CSX Corman Line right-of-way is abandoned and acquired by the NPS)
- a trail from Meadow Bridge to Meadow Creek (if and when the CSX Meadow Creek line right-of-way is abandoned and acquired by the NPS)

- a trail from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont (if and when the CSX Piney Creek spur line is abandoned and acquired by the NPS)
- a trail from GW Carver (via Babcock State Park) to Sewell to Caperton to Keeney Creek (in cooperation with Babcock State Park)

Possible new trails offering visitors experiences in and around river gateways would include:

- a trail to Fayette Mine
- a trail from Thurmond to Sewell
- a trail along Davis Branch (in the Meadow Creek North area) (with trailhead facilities)
- a trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain
- a trail from the Stone Cliff coke ovens to Stone Cliff Mine
- a trail to the Beauty Mountain Overlook

In Alternative 5 the NPS would also cooperate with the park's gateway communities, state agencies, and private landowners to develop new trail connections between the three national park units, state parks, rail trails, and other attractions in the region (see Figure 2.12). As NPS and its regional partners develop both the long distance continuous trails in the park and those connecting the park to the region, a network of farm- or community-based accommodations such as small bed-and-breakfasts could be developed to support trail users.

Alternative 5 would address the need for additional equestrian trails by providing new equestrian loop trails with trailhead facilities in the Bucklick Branch, Craig Branch, and Chestnut Mountain areas. The boardwalks at Sandstone Falls would also be expanded.

Trailhead facilities would be provided for all new trails. Improvements would also be made to the Glade Creek trailhead.

#### ■ **Biking (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

Alternative 5 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails listed in the preceding section subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.5 above. In addition, in Alternative 5 possible new biking opportunities would include:

- a continuous trail open to biking from end to end of the park (the through park connector) composed of a combination of trail types (see preceding section)
- development of stacked loop trails in the Bucklick Branch, Garden Ground, and Craig Branch areas

- development of new rail trails with biking access on railroad rights-of-way once they are abandoned and acquired by the NPS, including:
  - the CSX Corman line from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction
  - the CSX Meadow Creek line from Meadow Bridge to Meadow Creek
  - the CSX Piney Creek spur line along WV SR 41 from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont
- opening of the existing Glade Creek Trail to biking
- development of new trail connections between the three national park units, state parks, rail trails, and other attractions through cooperation between the NPS and the park's gateway communities, state agencies, county governments, and private landowners

■ **Hunting (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative) (Enhanced Hunting Program)**

In Alternative 5 hunting would continue largely as it is today except for the following:

- the historic Grandview State Park area would be open to limited bow hunting via a permit/lottery system
- upland gamebird habitat would be increased by creating/restoring early successional habitat in historic resource zones (where such management is consistent with the park's cultural landscape restoration goals)
- as in Alternative 4 (Modified Hunting Program), the NPS and WV DNR would collaboratively monitor park-specific game harvest and hunter use levels, using a voluntary hunter registration/permit process and designated hunt units; this process would include distribution of information to hunters (hunt unit maps, regulations, etc.) and a voluntary end-of-season hunter questionnaire provided by the NPS
- as in Alternative 4 (Modified Hunting Program), the NPS and WV DNR would develop a cooperative game management plan specific to designated hunt units in the park that would also identify management strategies to improve hunter satisfaction and enhance outreach opportunities to both hunters and non-hunters

■ **Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In Alternative 5 the NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible. As in Alternative 1 priorities would be to secure legal crossings at locations where visitors currently frequently cross tracks illegally. In addition effort would be focused on securing legal crossings needed for development of a new



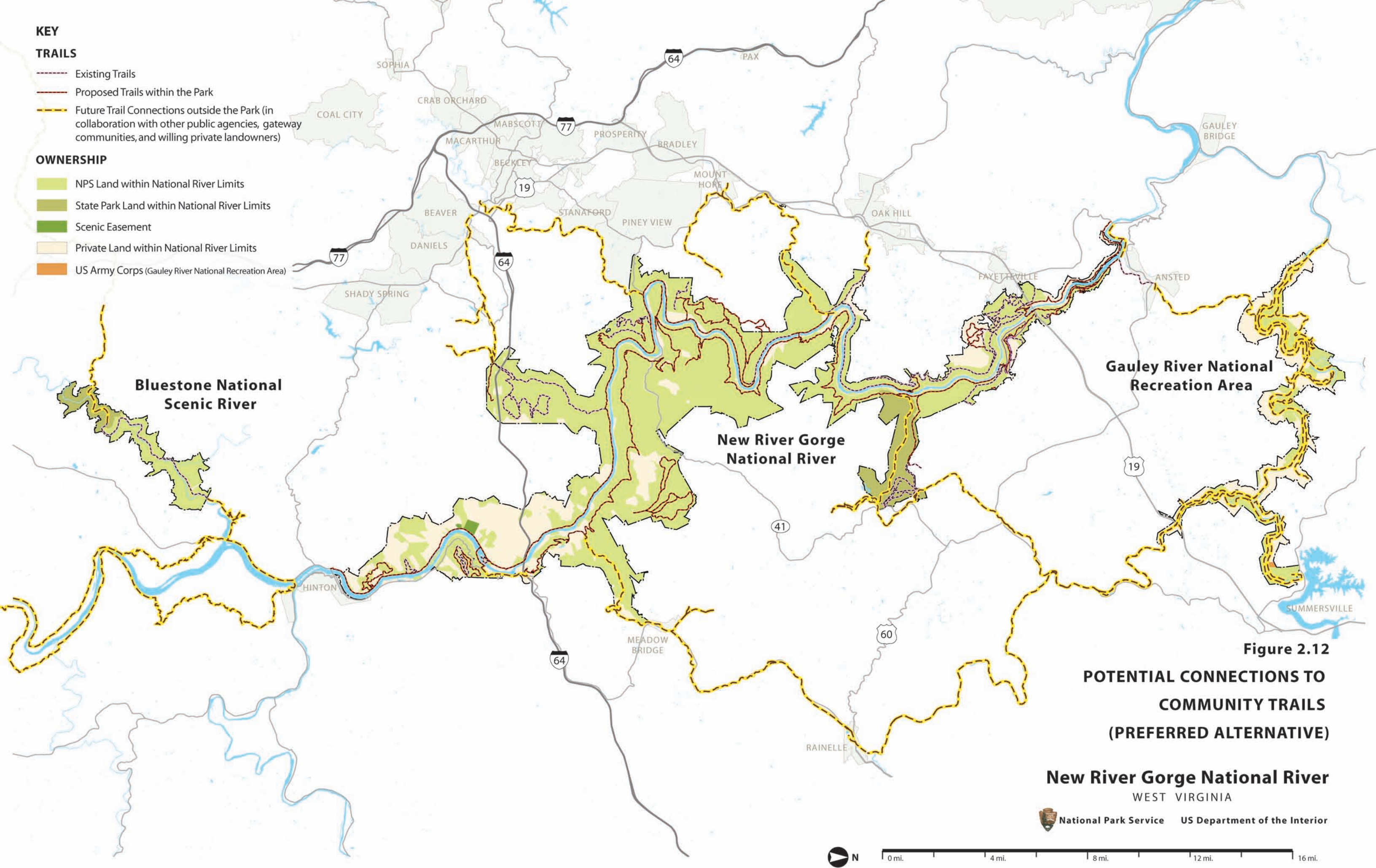
**KEY**

**TRAILS**

- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails within the Park
- Future Trail Connections outside the Park (in collaboration with other public agencies, gateway communities, and willing private landowners)

**OWNERSHIP**

- NPS Land within National River Limits
- State Park Land within National River Limits
- Scenic Easement
- Private Land within National River Limits
- US Army Corps (Gauley River National Recreation Area)



**Figure 2.12**  
**POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS TO**  
**COMMUNITY TRAILS**  
**(PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)**

**New River Gorge National River**  
WEST VIRGINIA

 **National Park Service** **US Department of the Interior**

developed campground at Terry Beach and for a rim to river trail from GW Carver to Keeney Creek.

■ **Access and Parking (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In Alternative 5 management actions would generally maintain existing patterns of motorized access within the park, while permitting expansion of motorized access for visitors and/or administrative use in park development zones, historic resource zones, river corridor zones, and frontcountry zones. Approximately two-thirds (66.4%) of the park would be zoned backcountry where roads and parking would be limited to zone perimeters (see Figure 2.11) and where only non-motorized access could occur in the zone interior.

In Alternative 5 trailheads would provide adequate parking for visitors at the endpoints of rim to river trails. Similarly trailheads with adequate parking would be provided for new trails offering visitor experiences in and around river gateways and in focal areas.

Existing problems with inadequate parking at visitor facilities would be alleviated by expanding parking areas at Sandstone Falls, the Gwinn Ridge trailhead, the Glade Creek trailhead, the Thayer campground and river access, and the Brooklyn day-use area. New visitor parking would be provided at Richmond-Hamilton Farm, Vallandingham Farm, and Cochran Farm.

New trailheads would provide adequate parking for visitors at the endpoints of new trails offering visitors opportunities to explore the park's primitive areas and cultural focal areas in remote areas of the park. Similarly trailheads with adequate parking would be provided along the length of the new through park connector.

At Cunard existing problems with inadequate parking for private paddlers on peak visitation days would be alleviated by:

- adding parking for private paddlers at Cunard (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road (common to Alternatives 2 to 5)
- implementing an alternative transportation system (ATS) composed of a concession-based shuttle that would operate on the Cunard Road, picking up and dropping off riders at a satellite parking area on the rim (at the site of the proposed Cunard boundary adjustment); the shuttle would primarily serve private paddlers and other visitors – outfitted paddlers would continue to ride to and from the river access on outfitter-operated buses
- expanding parking for fishermen and private boaters at Brooklyn



- if after making the above-listed improvements at Cunard and Brooklyn, visitor crowding issues during peak visitation days are still not adequately addressed, then the NPS would consider adding a new river access at Surprise, including – as appropriate and as practicable – extension of Cunard Road and electrical service beyond Brooklyn and development of a river launch, drop-off areas and parking facilities (for outfitted paddlers and private paddlers), comfort/changing stations, picnicking facilities, and water supply

In addition the NPS would work cooperatively with the WV DOH to:

- design and construct pull-outs on WV SR 41 from Stannaford to McCreery
- design and construct improvements to McKendree Road (WV SR 25) from Stone Cliff Bridge to Prince and to designate it a state scenic byway
- design and construct improvements to WV SR 25/2 in Thurmond
- **Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access) (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

Additional visitor facilities associated with Alternative 5 would include camping, picnicking, and river access facilities in support of rim to river experiences, in and around river gateways, and in focal areas. All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities (common to Alternatives 2 to 5).

In the Upper River Gorge Focal Area:

- at Camp Brookside the NPS would work in partnership with an educational institution to rehabilitate camp buildings for adaptive reuse for education purposes
- a new developed campground would be provided at the Bass Lake site (if and when it could be acquired by the NPS from a willing seller) or at a park development zone in the New River Parkway corridor (existing River Road corridor), such as at Richmond Bottom
- a new developed public campground would be developed at Meadow Creek West; in conjunction with this facility there would be an amphitheatre, picnic facilities, and a public river access site, including a river launch (with disabled boater access), parking, comfort/changing stations, and utilities

In the Grandview/Prince Focal Area:

- a new developed campground and river access would be provided at Terry Beach (if and when the required property could be acquired by the NPS from a willing seller)
- improvements to existing primitive campgrounds at Glade Creek, Mill Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Army Camp would add more campsites to each

In the Thurmond Focal Area, the existing Dun Glen campground would be closed (because of its location in the floodplain) and existing day-use facilities would be rehabilitated.

In the Lower Gorge Focal Area:

- a new developed campground would be located at the existing NPS Burnwood day-use/operations area; this campground would address the need for camping facilities in proximity to rock climbing areas and cultural resource attractions in the lower gorge
- a new day-use area would be added near the Fayette Station river access
- new picnicking facilities would be added with parking and pedestrian access to the New River at Brooklyn
- at Cunard existing problems with inadequate parking for private paddlers on peak visitation days would be alleviated by implementing a number of improvements (see Access and Parking above)

River access improvements associated with Alternative 5 would include:

- a new access at Meadow Creek West near the Sandstone Visitor Center
- a new river access at Terry Beach (described above)
- additional parking for private paddlers at Cunard and implementation of an alternative transportation system (see Access and Parking above)
- expanding parking for fishermen and private boaters at Brooklyn (see Access and Parking above)
- if after making the above-listed improvements at Cunard and Brooklyn, visitor crowding issues during peak visitation days are still not adequately addressed, then the NPS would consider adding a new river access at Surprise (see Access and Parking above)

Additional camping facilities would include several groups of designated backcountry campsite groups 1) along the Through Park Connector, and 2) along the Dowdy Creek Highland Mountain Trail.

## **2.8.5 Working with Local Communities (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

### **■ Sustaining Communities within the Park (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

**Hinton.** No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 5 to strengthen the connection between the city, its residents, and the mission of the NPS at the park beyond those identified as common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7 above).

**Thurmond.** Thurmond would become a major visitor attraction in the north end of the park where the railroading story would be told (see Table 2.28). Visitation levels would dramatically increase. Visitor lodging would likely be available in restored houses. Visitors would be more likely to explore areas of the town where private residents live. The town's permanent residential population would increase as a result of NPS staff living in some restored houses. The NPS would continue to work cooperatively with residents – including NPS staff residents – to address issues associated with living in the historic town.

**Other Communities within the Park.** Collaborative priorities for communities within the park in Alternative 5 are summarized in Table 2.31 below. The collaboration actions referenced in Table 2.31 are described above in the discussion of actions common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (see Section 2.4.7).

## **2.8.6 Land Protection (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

### **■ Land Protection Priorities (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In the future the NPS land protection program would focus efforts on the highest priority properties still to be protected in the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). For Alternative 5 the priorities for working with willing sellers of private property would be further refined to focus on acquiring properties that are important to accomplishing the overall concept for the alternative, such as properties that:

- include early settlement/agricultural cultural resources in the south end of the park
- include industrial and mining town ruins in the north end of the park
- include sites needed for trailheads, trail connections, or recreational sites along the through park connector and along other new trails offering visitors experiences in and around river gateways
- include a site for a developed campground near the river in the south end of the park

### **■ Stewardship of Private Land Remaining within the Park Boundary (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In the future the NPS would work cooperatively with the owners of private lands remaining within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship of privately-owned resources and values that are fundamental to the park (see Section 2.4.8 above). In Alternative 5 NPS would further focus the stewardship program on the private lands that are of high priority for protection as noted in Section 2.4.8 above and in the preceding section (Land Protection Priorities).

Table 2.31 Alternative 5 – Collaborative Priorities for Communities within the Park\*

		Collaborative Actions by the NPS and Local Communities within the Park									
Community	Alternative 5 Setting	Collaboration Priority	Form Community Partner Group	Provide Technical Assistance to Communities for							
				Developing a Community Vision Plan	Managing Change	Managing Visitor Impacts	Documenting Resources	Obtaining Grants	Managing Invasive Species	Providing Private Sector Visitor Services	Develop NPS Facilities, as Needed
Hinton	A major gateway community partly within the park at its southern end; no major existing or new visitor use facilities	1	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
Meadow Creek	a “river gateway” at the downstream end of the Upper River Corridor Focal Area (minimum visitor through traffic); Sandstone Visitor Center and numerous new visitor facilities in vicinity	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prince/Quinnimont	a “river gateway” in the center of the Grandview/ Prince Focal Area (visitor and public through traffic on WV SR 41); numerous existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity; rehabilitate and lease the Prince Brothers General Store; restore the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store and the Prince Estate; work cooperatively with AMTRAK to maintain customer service to Prince and provide interpretation at the Prince Station; provide roadside interpretation along WV Route 41 from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terry	adjoining a new recreation node within the Grandview/Prince Focal Area (no visitor through traffic); numerous existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Thayer	along the through park connector (McKendree Road Scenic Backway); a few existing and new visitor facilities in vicinity	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Backus	on plateau surrounded by primitive outdoor experience area; no existing or new visitor facilities in vicinity	3	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Highland	on plateau surrounded by primitive outdoor experience area; no existing or new visitor facilities in vicinity	3	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Thurmond	a major “river gateway” within a park focal area; restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures would dramatically increase visitation and the number of residents living in the town	1				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 – High Priority    2 – Medium Priority    3 – Low Priority    ✓ - action recommended, as funding allows											

### **2.8.7 Partnerships (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

#### **■ Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In the future the NPS would take a number of actions aimed at strengthening the connection between the public and the mission of the NPS at New River Gorge National River (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 5 to enhance local appreciation and understanding of the park beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

#### **■ Gateway Community Partnerships (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In the future the NPS would expand efforts to work cooperatively with its gateway communities to define and accomplish shared goals (see Section 2.4.9 above). As in Alternative 4, partnerships between the NPS and the park's gateway communities would seek to enhance the visitor experience by providing better visitor orientation, by promoting services needed by visitors in gateway communities, by fostering improved wayfinding signage, and by promoting complementary interpretive and recreational experiences at other attractions in southern West Virginia. Small visitor contact facilities and/or information kiosks would provide information on recreation activities, visitor facilities, and interpretive programs at the park as well as at other attractions in the region.

#### **■ Regional Tourism Partnerships (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In the future the NPS would expand its participation in regional economic development planning efforts underway by the various regional planning agencies and organizations in southern West Virginia (see Section 2.4.9 above). No additional actions would be implemented in Alternative 5 related to NPS participation in these efforts beyond those identified in Section 2.4.9.

#### **■ Other Partnerships (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

In the future the NPS would expand its collaboration with other public agencies and groups – including Babcock and Hawks Nest State Parks, state and county agencies, and organized stakeholder groups (see Section 2.4.9 above). In Alternative 5 the NPS would further increase collaborative efforts with the state parks (for trail development), with biking stakeholder groups (for development of stacked loop trails), and with the WV DNR (for development of a cooperative game management plan and harvest monitoring).

As NPS and its regional partners develop both the long distance continuous trails in the park and those connecting the park to the region, a network of farm- or community-based accommodations such as small bed-and-breakfasts could be developed to support trail users. Similar systems in Europe allow visitors to have meals and non-camping alternatives, geared to single-night stays, relieving hikers, and bikers of the need to carry tents, cooking gear, and heavy provisions.

### **2.8.8 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

Table 2.32 identifies the desired resource conditions and desired visitor experiences for specific areas of the park in Alternative 5. The area-specific desired conditions focus on fundamental and other important resources and values and the visitor experience opportunities associated with them that would be appropriate in particular locations based on proposed management zoning.

Table 2.32 also identifies the general types of actions in specific areas of the park that would be needed and allowable to achieve desired conditions in Alternative 5. These are examples of the actions needed to move from existing conditions to desired conditions. Identifying the types of needed and allowable changes helps 1) to provide a sense of what management actions might occur and what development might look like in Alternative 5, 2) to identify the impacts of these actions, and 3) to estimate the general costs of implementing the actions.

### **2.8.9 Costs (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

The NPS has prepared estimates of annual operating costs and one-time costs associated with Alternative 5 using NPS and industry cost estimating guidelines (see Table 2.37 in Section 2.14 below). Annual recurring costs include personnel and non-labor costs, such as utilities, vehicles, travel, and supplies. One-time capital investments include construction, exhibits, research and planning. These costs are presented for comparative purposes only and will be refined at a later date based upon final design of facilities and other considerations. Some projects have the potential to be funded through partnerships and volunteers, or through shared funding with other agencies. Therefore, actual costs would vary depending on when specific actions are implemented and on contributions by partners and volunteers.

#### **■ NPS Annual Operating Costs and Staffing Requirements (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

NPS annual operating costs associated with Alternative 5 are estimated to be \$15,820,000 (2009 dollars). This includes the anticipated cost for staff salaries and benefits for 189 full-time equivalent staff, utilities, supplies, leasing (including leased park offices, as in Alternative 5) and other materials needed for park maintenance and operations.

Operating costs for Alternative 5 include the addition of 29 new FTE. The new positions include one new FTE to help develop and manage partnerships with the gateway communities, additional protection rangers to manage and cover new campgrounds, new maintenance staff to maintain and service the new campgrounds, trails and river access/day use facilities and new interpretive staff to expand interpretive programs and service increased visitation as the result of new facilities.

■ **NPS One-Time Costs (Alternative 5 – Preferred Alternative)**

NPS one-time costs associated with Alternative 5 are estimated to be \$29,670,000 (2009 dollars) including one-time facilities costs and non-facilities costs.

Facility costs include projects such as the following:

- restore Richmond-Hamilton farm for interpretation
- rehabilitate the Trump-Lilly and Vallandingham farmhouses and the Prince Brothers General Store through the NPS historic leasing program
- rehabilitate Camp Brookside for educational purposes
- rehabilitate a few historic houses as park housing and the remainder of the historic houses for the historic lease program in Thurmond
- rehabilitate Thurmond's commercial row through partnership
- provide new trails for rock climber access
- provide two new equestrian trails
- provide hiking and biking trails and trailheads for rim to river experiences, the through park connector, backcountry areas and cultural sites
- provide two new hiking and biking trails and trailheads as part of the through park connector
- provide a new stacked loop biking trail in a front country area
- provide new improvements to Turkey Spur at Grandview
- provide improvements to parking and circulation at Grandview
- improve Cunard and Fayette Station river access areas to relieve congestion
- provide improvements and expand sandstone falls facilities
- expand parking at middle gorge areas such as Glade Creek, McCreery, Thayer and Gwinn Ridge
- relocate Stone Cliff campground from riparian area
- improve day use areas at Brooks Falls, Dun Glen, Mill Creek and Fayette Station
- develop a new camping facility at Meadow Creek West and additional camping south of I-64
- expand existing primitive campgrounds at Glade Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Army Camp
- develop new designated backcountry campsites
- develop new campground with river access at Terry Beach

Non-facility costs include projects such as the following:

- restore the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store and Estate
- restore farm fields, fence lines and orchards on historic farms for agricultural leasing program
- develop 35 cultural resources as discovery sites accessible from gateway communities and along through the park connector
- pedestrian access across CSX right-of-way at new campgrounds
- develop new scenic vistas
- install and maintain information kiosks at gateway communities
- improve local appreciation and understanding by providing roadside interpretation along four roads through gateway communities



Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Development Areas</b>			
<b>Richmond Campground</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>newly acquired site with limited infrastructure</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground (one campground would be developed north of I-64 in a park development zone on river left, such as Richmond Bottom, OR at Bass Lake on river right)</li> </ul>
<b>Bass Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bass Lake Campground (private)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground (one campground would be developed north of I-64 in a park development zone on river left, such as Richmond Bottom, OR at Bass Lake on river right)</li> <li>provide a public river access (including facilities for disabled boaters)</li> <li>provide picnicking facilities and hiking trails near the river</li> </ul>
<b>Sandstone Visitor Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandstone Visitor Center</li> <li>parking, picnicking facilities, and public restrooms</li> <li>NPS operations facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a rim-to-river trail from the Sandstone Visitor Center to Lower Hump Mountain</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek West</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the park</li> <li>accessible facilities enable disabled visitors to experience the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a developed campground</li> <li>offer amphitheatre-based interpretive programs</li> <li>provide a public river access facility including a river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> </ul>
<b>Grandview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day-use facilities (picnicking facilities, recreational facilities, playground, trails, overlooks, restrooms) (high use – demand for picnic shelters exceeds capacity)</li> <li>amphitheatre (used for Theatre West Virginia productions) (needs rehabilitation)</li> <li>visitor contact station (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>main overlook not ADA accessible</li> <li>road system and parking (pedestrian and vehicular circulation issues occur during peak visitation periods)</li> <li>public water supply and wastewater treatment facilities</li> <li>NPS operations facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a Grandview to Mill Creek rim-to-river trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Terry Beach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McCreery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (high use)</li> <li>demand exceeds capacity during peak visitation periods leading to safety issues and visitor conflicts</li> <li>private paddler safety issues due to pedestrian crossing of WV SR 41)</li> <li>NPS unable to acquire property needed to relocate parking and address safety issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>Terry Beach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>private river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping (low use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors enjoy a safe and secure experience in the park</li> <li>conflicts among visitor user groups are minimized</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a public river access facility at Terry Beach, including a river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> <li>provide a developed campground at Terry Beach</li> </ul>
<b>Dun Glen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>Dun Glen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day use facilities (picnicking, parking, restrooms)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>close existing campground and restore riparian habitat</li> <li>as it becomes obsolete, relocate existing</li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- group campground (in floodplain)</li> <li>- park operations facility (in remnants of Dun Glen Hotel) (block access to river – functionally obsolete)</li> <li>- park housing (dorms) (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>▪ visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Corman Spur Line at Southside Junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>▪ management facilities support efficient park operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ park housing elsewhere in the park</li> <li>▪ rehabilitate day-use facilities (restrooms, picnic shelter, parking, access road)</li> <li>▪ as park operations buildings become functionally obsolete, consider relocating existing park operations functions to Burnwood and demolishing buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Glen Jean (Park Headquarters)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ park headquarters, headquarters annex (Glen Jean Bank), and operations facilities</li> <li>▪ Glen Jean Bank (listed on National Register) (good condition)</li> <li>▪ all structures located within 25-year floodplain</li> <li>▪ park collection facility in Glen Jean Bank (within the floodplain)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ interpret the Glen Jean Bank</li> <li>▪ provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 25 from Glen Jean to Thurmond</li> </ul>
<b>Cunard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ river access (high use)</li> <li>▪ crowded conditions during most summer weekends, especially when river levels are low</li> <li>▪ inadequate private paddler</li> <li>▪ parking inadequate boat slide capacity</li> <li>▪ limited river access for disabled boaters</li> <li>▪ visitor conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>▪ visitors use a variety of travel modes to access the park and specific visitor use sites</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>▪ interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ during periods of high visitor use provide a concession-based shuttle from satellite parking areas to the river access site</li> <li>▪ if after making the above-listed river access improvements identified for Cunard and Brooklyn, capacity issues still remain on peak visitation days, then consider developing a new public river access facility at Surprise (<i>see Arbutuckle Creek to Brooklyn River Corridor Zone below</i>)</li> <li>▪ provide interpretation along the Cunard Access Road from the community of Cunard to the Cunard River access</li> <li>▪ interpret the Cunard tipple and coke ovens</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Fayette Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>▪ river access (high use)</li> <li>▪ day-use facilities (parking, picnicking, public restrooms)</li> <li>▪ CSX Main Line (active)</li> <li>▪ visitors (primarily private paddlers) frequently illegally cross the CSX Main Line to reach the river access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>▪ visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>▪ provide a day-use area adjacent to the New River</li> <li>▪ provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) to Fayette Mine</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Burnwood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ environmental education based at picnic pavilions (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>▪ Laing Loop Nature Trail</li> <li>▪ park operations facilities (functionally obsolete)</li> <li>▪ public water supply and wastewater treatment facility (serving Burnwood and the Canyon Rim Visitor Center) (excess capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide a developed campground (with connection to existing Burnwood water and wastewater systems)</li> <li>▪ (also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Resource Areas</b>			
<b>Richmond Bottom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Richmond-Hamilton Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- farmhouse (habitable condition), split-log barns (period condition), other outbuildings (period condition)</li> <li>- fields not leased for agriculture</li> <li>- no park facilities</li> <li>- no interpretive programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Vallandigham Farm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- log cabin (not habitable), log smokehouse, other outbuildings</li> <li>- vegetation impacting site</li> <li>- no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>▪ historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>▪ collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at Richmond-Hamilton Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- restore farm fields, fence lines, and orchards</li> <li>- restore the farmhouse and barns to period condition</li> <li>- interpret the cultural landscape</li> <li>- provide access and parking for visitors</li> <li>- provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ at Vallandigham Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rehabilitate the cultural landscape</li> <li>- rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide access and parking for visitors</li> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> <li>as other properties at Richmond Bottom are acquired or otherwise protected, remove modern structures and maintain farm fields and plantings</li> <li>lease all restored and rehabilitated farm fields for agricultural use</li> </ul> <p>provide trailhead facilities at farmstead destinations on the farm loop trail</p>
<b>Trump-Lilly Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farm, outbuildings, farm fields, and orchard</li> <li>excellent example of post-bellum subsistence farmstead in uplands of the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register</li> <li>farmhouse not habitable</li> <li>approximately 10 percent of historic fields are presently open</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore the cultural landscape</li> <li>rehabilitate the farmhouse (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> <li>lease restored farm fields for agricultural use</li> </ul>
<b>Westfall Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>privately-owned; recently subdivided and some new homes constructed</li> <li>no park facilities</li> <li>Cochran Farm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outbuildings, cemetery, small pond (filling in)</li> <li>most of site is an open field with</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Cochran Farm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore the cultural landscape</li> <li>provide access and parking for visitors</li> </ul> </li> <li>as properties within the historic extent of the farm are acquired or otherwise protected, remove modern structures and maintain farm fields and plantings</li> <li>lease restored fields for agricultural use</li> </ul>
<b>Camp Brookside</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>site retains original camp structures, generally in good condition</li> <li>landscape features are indicative of a typical recreational camp</li> <li>good example of post-World War II social welfare programs established by American companies</li> <li>potentially eligible for the National Register</li> <li>NPS ranger station and maintenance storage building</li> <li>no interpretive programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>cobble and flatrock communities persist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in partnership with an educational institution, rehabilitate buildings for adaptive reuse for environmental education purposes; potential uses include, but are not limited to, conference facilities, classrooms, and student overnight accommodations</li> </ul>
<b>Sandstone Falls Island</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>most visited site in upper gorge</li> <li>park day-use facility with parking, and picnicking</li> <li>boardwalk and interpretive trail takes visitors through rare Appalachian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cobble and flatrock communities persist</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide additional parking</li> <li>expand boardwalk trails</li> <li>replace and expand restroom facilities</li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flatrock community and provides vistas of Sandstone Falls</li> <li>river access below falls</li> <li>restrooms functionally obsolete</li> <li>lack of visitor control leads to riparian zone impacts</li> <li>parking inadequate during periods of high visitor use and other times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Harrah Homestead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame house, wood-frame outbuildings, log smokehouse (all in very poor condition)</li> <li>vegetation impacting site</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restore the cultural landscape and the exterior of the house and ancillary buildings as a display of life outside of the towns in the gorge</li> </ul>
<b>Prince Brothers General Store</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood-frame store (recently stabilized on exterior)</li> <li>last surviving commercial building of its type along the New River</li> <li>listed on National Register (for its architectural design)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate the Prince Brothers General Store (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>restore the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store</li> </ul>
<b>Thurmond</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>town mostly owned by the NPS, although some houses remain in private ownership and are occupied year-round</li> <li>entire town site included within the Thurmond Historic District (listed on National Register)</li> <li>restored Thurmond Depot (used as NPS visitor center) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>Commercial Row (stabilized on exterior) (listed individually on National Register)</li> <li>remnants of C&amp;O train yard and passenger depot</li> <li>various frame houses (variable condition – some in poor condition, some recently stabilized on exterior only)</li> <li>vegetation (kudzu) negatively impacted site</li> <li>structures at Commercial row have lead and asbestos contamination</li> <li>inadequate water supply and wastewater treatment systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remaining elements of historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes are preserved or protected; some are made accessible to visitors</li> <li>historic buildings and cultural landscapes are managed to produce income that offsets the cost of their ongoing maintenance</li> <li>collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor interpretation and experiences</li> <li>views of cultural landscapes are protected</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitate commercial row buildings (for reuse through the NPS historic leasing program)</li> <li>rehabilitate houses that are currently in good condition for reuse for park housing, park dormitory housing, or visitor lodging through the NPS historic leasing program</li> <li>restore other remaining historic structures (on the exterior only)</li> <li>provide a trail from Thurmond to Sewell Trail (including trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>
<b>River Corridor Areas</b>			
<b>Hinton to Meadow Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New River fishing (high use)</li> <li>Akers river access and day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>Tug Creek river access (low use)</li> <li>Brooks Falls river access, day-use facilities, undesignated camping (in floodplain) (poor condition) (high use)</li> <li>Hellems Beach river access, day-use facilities, and campground (campsites in floodplain – use over capacity during peak visitation periods) (high use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>river access facilities enable paddlers of all skill levels to experience the river</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate New River Parkway (existing River Road) as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>at Brooks Falls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve existing river access facilities</li> <li>provide new restroom facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a through park connector segment (with trailhead facilities) from I-64 to Glade Creek Road</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandstone Falls river take-out (moderate use)</li> <li>Meadow Creek private river access (low use)</li> <li>future WV DOH-funded reconstruction of River Road as New River Parkway, including a bridge across the New River and recreation site enhancements</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>		
<b>Meadow Creek to Quinnimont</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>Glade Creek               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>Glade Creek campground and day-use area (high use) (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mill Creek               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (low use)</li> <li>undesignated camping occurs in floodplain)</li> <li>no restrooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>walk-in camping at Grassy Shoals, Mill Creek, and Royal Pull-Out</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a through park connector segment (with trailhead facilities) from I-64 to Glade Creek Road</li> <li>designate Glade Creek Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>at Glade Creek, expand the existing campground</li> <li>at Mill Creek               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a Grandview to Mill Creek rim-to-river trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a vault toilet</li> </ul>
<b>Quinnimont to Army Camp</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glade Creek Road Scenic Backway</li> <li>Grandview Sandbar               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>campground (high use) (demand frequently exceeds capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Army Camp               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (moderate use)</li> <li>day-use facilities (low use)</li> <li>campground (demand for camping typically exceeds capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line on river left (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Army Camp               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expand the existing campground</li> <li>provide a river-to-rim trail from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul> </li> <li>at Grandview Sandbar, expand the existing campground</li> </ul>
<b>Army Camp to Stone Cliff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thayer               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>river access (low use)</li> <li>day-use area and campground (undesignated sites) (demand frequently exceeds capacity) (no public restrooms)</li> </ul> </li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross CSX Main Line to reach Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, and Todd Beach (for camping)</li> <li>river rest stop at Dowdy Creek where paddlers frequently illegally cross under CSX Main Line to reach Dowdy Falls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Thayer:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate campsites in the area now used for primitive camping</li> <li>provide a vault toilet</li> <li>improve existing river access, parking, and picnicking facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way at Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, and Todd Beach</li> </ul>
<b>Arbuckle Creek to Brooklyn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACE river access (private)</li> <li>Brooklyn to Southside Junction Administrative Road</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>traffic circulation and parking is managed to reduce impacts on park resources and provide for safe visitor use while mitigating intrusion of auto traffic on the visitor experience</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> <li>a nearly continuous strip of natural riparian habitat occurs along the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if after making the river access improvements at Cunard (see <i>Cunard Development Zone above</i>) and at Brooklyn (see <i>Brooklyn to Hawks Nest River Corridor Zone below</i>), capacity issues still remain on peak visitation days, then consider developing a new public river access facility at Surprise, including as appropriate and as practicable, river launch, parking, road improvements, comfort/changing station, utilities, picnicking facilities, and disabled boater access</li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Brooklyn to Hawks Nest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undesignated camping (moderate use)</li> <li>river fishing (no day-use facilities) (moderate use)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Teays Landing river access (private)</li> <li>CSX Main Line on river right upstream of Cunard and on river right and river left downstream of Cunard (active)</li> <li>visitors frequently illegally cross over CSX Main Line               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to reach the lower railroad area (for fishing and boating)</li> <li>to reach Short Creek (for camping and fishing)</li> <li>to reach Kaymoor via the tunnel under the tracks (for hiking) and day-use area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Brooklyn, provide new picnicking facilities with parking and pedestrian access to the river</li> <li>at Teays Landing, provide a trail segment for the through park connector (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> <li>work cooperatively with the CSX Corporation to secure safe legal public access to the river across the CSX right-of-way in the lower railroad area, at Short Creek, and at Kaymoor</li> </ul>
<b>Forest Areas</b>			
<b>Sewell Mountain (Backcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big Branch Trail and Trailhead (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a farm loop trail</li> </ul>
<b>Chestnut Mountain (Backcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandstone Overlook – parking demand exceeds capacity</li> <li>Gwinn Ridge Trail provides access for hiking</li> <li>Gwinn Ridge Trailhead – parking demand exceeds capacity</li> <li>Lick Creek - water quality impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide an equestrian loop trail</li> <li>expand parking capacity at the Gwinn Ridge Trailhead, including facilities for horse trailers</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Mountain (Backcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail segment of the through park connector from New River Parkway (existing River Road) to the Glade Creek drainage</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the through park connector</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek South (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meadow Creek – water quality impaired</li> <li>fish stocking in Meadow Creek (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>CSX Meadow Creek rail line (active)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a trail from Sandstone Visitor Center to Meadow Creek</li> <li>a rim-to-river trail from the Sandstone Visitor Center to Lower Hump Mountain</li> <li>a rim-to-river trail from WV SR 20 to Glade Creek (using the Meadow Creek rail line right-of-way, if and when it is abandoned)</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Meadow Creek Rail/Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Meadow Creek North (Backcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail along Davis Branch</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the new Davis Branch Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Bucklick Branch (Frontcountry Zone)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a stacked loop bike trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> <li>provide an equestrian loop trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Highland-Backus</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River on the gorge wall</li> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities is heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- from Davis Branch to Quinnimont</li> <li>- from Quinnimont to Dowdy Creek</li> </ul> </li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Stretcher Neck</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a river-to-rim trail from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock</li> </ul>
<b>Dowdy Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River on the gorge wall</li> <li>hunting area</li> <li>no designated trailheads – two sites with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Dowdy Creek to the Highland Mountain Trail</li> <li>provide several designated backcountry campsite groups along the Dowdy Creek Highland Mountain Trail</li> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>work cooperatively with WV DOH to improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul>
<b>Claremont</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>fishing – Buffalo Creek (low use)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – two sites with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking by hunters</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> </ul>
<b>Substation</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River just above the river level</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> </ul>
<b>Glade Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>popular hunting and fishing area (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR and Glade-Pinch Trout Association</li> <li>fish stocking in Mill Creek by WV DNR</li> <li>Glade Creek Trail provides fishing access and a connection from the rim to the river (admin vehicles permitted on upper section)</li> <li>Polls Plateau Trail, Kates Plateau Trail and Kates Falls Trail provide access for primitive camping and hunting</li> <li>Lower Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>Upper Glade Creek Trailhead (demand exceeds capacity)</li> <li>Cloverdale Road area used for access to Kates Plateau Trail although no trailhead facilities are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hydrologic features provide a mosaic of habitats that supports a full range of natural aquatic organisms</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete studies to understand impacts of stocking on native trout fish stocking; continue to support stocking by WV DNR and park partners, if deemed appropriate</li> <li>provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a segment of the through park connector from the New River Parkway to Glade Creek</li> <li>- a segment of the Grandview to Mill Creek rim-to-river trail</li> <li>- a trail from Cloverdale Road to the upper Glade Creek Trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>open Glade Creek Trail to biking</li> <li>provide trailheads:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expand parking capacity at Glade Creek Trailhead</li> <li>- provide a trailhead at Cloverdale Road</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Royal</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line (active)</li> <li>Piney Creek - water quality impaired</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a segment of the Grandview to Mill Creek rim-to-river trail</li> <li>- a segment of the WV SR 41 to Glade Creek rim-to-river trail (using the CSX Piney Creek spur line right-of-way, if and when it is abandoned)</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide trailheads:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for the Grandview to Mill Creek Trail</li> <li>- for the WV SR 41 to Glade Creek Trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 41</li> </ul>

Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes

Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area (upstream to downstream)	Existing Conditions and Facilities	Desired Conditions	Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions
<b>Terry-Batoff Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSX Piney Creek spur line (active)</li> <li>Piney Creek - water quality impaired</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a segment of the new WV SR 41 to Glade Creek rim-to-river trail (using the CSX Piney Creek spur line right-of-way, if and when it is abandoned)</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 41</li> </ul>
<b>Garden Ground</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stone Cliff Trail (low use)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one plateau site with no developed facilities heavily used for parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> <li>provide a stacked loop bike trail (with trailhead facilities)</li> <li>provide a segment of the through park connector from the Stone Cliff Trail to Terry</li> </ul>
<b>Dunloup Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River at the river level</li> <li>Thurmond-Minden Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>fish stocking in Dunloup Creek by WV DNR (moderate fishing use)</li> <li>CSX Corman spur line (active)</li> <li>recurring flooding along Dunloup Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>if and when the CSX Corman Line is abandoned provide a rail/trail from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction</li> <li>provide a trailhead for the Mt. Hope to Southside Junction Rail/Trail</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 25 from Glen Jean to Thurmond</li> </ul>
<b>Arbuckle Creek</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thurmond-Minden Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>Arbuckle Creek – impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> </ul>
<b>Rush Run</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooklyn Mine Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Southside Trail (high use)</li> <li>Cunard Access Road</li> <li>Cunard Trailhead parking area</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along the Cunard Access Road from the community of Cunard to the Cunard River access</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Craig Branch</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road “classic park experience” (high use)</li> <li>numerous park trails (high use)</li> <li>South Nuttall climbing area (low use)</li> <li>Kaymoor climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Butcher Branch climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Longmont Trailhead</li> <li>Bridge Trailhead</li> <li>Wolf Creek Trailhead (demand frequently exceeds capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>a variety of camping experiences are available for different types of visitors</li> <li>visitor services and facilities are appropriately scaled and located, and they facilitate enjoyable and educational visits to the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate an existing trail as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>provide a designated backcountry campsite group</li> <li>provide a stacked loop bike trail and a new equestrian loop trail (with shared trailhead facilities)</li> <li>improve the existing Wolf Creek Trailhead</li> </ul>
<b>Above Thurmond</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKendree Road (WV SR 25) parallels the New River near the river level</li> <li>hunting area (on plateau)</li> <li>no designated trailheads – one site with no developed facilities are heavily used for parking</li> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>connectivity in the park is enhanced through improvements to existing public roads and park roads and addition of new roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate McKendree Road as a segment of the through park connector</li> <li>provide trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- from the Stone Cliff coke ovens to Stone Cliff Mine</li> <li>- from Stone Cliff Mine to Thurmond</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Below Thurmond</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no park facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop trail from Thurmond to Sewell</li> </ul>
<b>Sewell</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hunting area (plateau above Fire Creek, Ephraim Creek, Mann Creek, and Keeney Creek)</li> <li>no NPS facilities</li> <li>partially included within Babcock State Park (facilities include trails)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mutual park management goals are effectively realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail from Thurmond to Sewell</li> <li>provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) from GW Carver (via Babcock State Park) to Sewell to Caperton to Keeney Creek (in cooperation with Babcock State Park)</li> </ul>



**Table 2.32 Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative) – Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes**

<b>Management Zone/ Site-Specific Area</b> (upstream to downstream)	<b>Existing Conditions and Facilities</b>	<b>Desired Conditions</b>	<b>Examples of Changes Needed to Achieve Desired Conditions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek and Mann Creek by WV DNR (moderate use)</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Babcock State Park</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babcock State Park (facilities include cabins, campground, Glade Creek Grist Mill, swimming beach, boat rentals, picnic facilities, trails, horseback riding concession)</li> <li>fish stocking in Glade Creek by WV DNR (moderate use)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mutual park management goals are effectively realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park</li> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) from GW Carver (via Babcock State Park) to Sewell to Caperton to Keeney Creek (in cooperation with Babcock State Park)</li> </ul>
<b>Beauty Mountain</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beauty Mountain climbing area</li> <li>Beauty Mountain overlook (no designated trail)</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>interpretive and educational programs are expanded to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail (with trailhead facilities) to the Beauty Mountain overlook</li> <li>provide a trail from Nuttallburg to Fayette Mine</li> <li>provide roadside interpretation along WV SR 85/2 from Lookout to Winona to Nuttallburg</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Endless Wall</b> (Backcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>Ambassador Butte climbing area (low use)</li> <li>Diamond Foot/Cirque climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Endless Wall climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Endless Wall Trail and Nuttall Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>Fern Creek Trail and Trailhead (high use)</li> <li>proliferation of undesignated trails accessing Ambassador Butte and at the base of the Endless Wall</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail to Fayette Mine</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>
<b>Ames</b> (Frontcountry Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Station Road (high use) (traffic volumes and types of vehicles generally exceed the roadway's design capacity)</li> <li>Bridge Butte climbing area (high use)</li> <li>Bridge Butte parking area</li> <li>Bubba City climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>Junkyard climbing area (moderate use)</li> <li>no designated trails to climbing routes at Bubba City or Junkyard</li> <li>provides critical habitat for rare mammals</li> <li>rare rimrock pine communities occur in cliff areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a variety of trails enable visitors with different physical capabilities to explore the park</li> <li>mutual park management goals are effectively realized through collaboration among the NPS, Hawks Nest State Park, and Babcock State Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a trail segment for the through park connector</li> <li>(also see examples of changes common to Alternatives 2 to 5 (Table 2.12))</li> </ul>

## 2.9 Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

### 2.9.1 Elimination of Hunting at New River Gorge National River

When the decision to develop a new General Management Plan was made in 2004, Section 1106 of Public Law 95-625, the New River Gorge National River enabling legislation, provided in part that “The Secretary may permit hunting and fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the boundaries of the New River Gorge National River in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws . . .” The park’s existing General Management Plan (GMP), dated November 1982, addressed hunting as an approved recreational activity. Page 15 states that “Recreational hunting of game will be permitted in accordance with state regulations, with the exception of jointly designated limited closures for reasons of public safety or wildlife preservation.” An Environmental Assessment was completed and a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed by the Regional Director in October 1978. Since adoption of the 1982 GMP, the NPS has permitted hunting on lands owned by the United States and administered by the NPS, except for reasons of public safety in areas of developed recreational facilities, such as river accesses, high-use trails, and campgrounds, etc.

After the GMP was completed and hunting had begun at New River Gorge National River, 36 C.F.R. § 2.2(b)(2) was changed to state, “Hunting may be allowed in park areas where such activity is specifically authorized as a discretionary activity under Federal Statutory law if the superintendent determines that such activity is consistent with public safety and enjoyment and sound resource management principles. Such hunting shall be allowed pursuant to special regulations.” However, New River Gorge National River had never developed such a regulation.

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), in a letter dated April 10, 2002, pointed out the need for a regulation to be promulgated to permit hunting at New River Gorge National River. On September 25, 2003, an interim final rule (RIN1024-AD-12) was published in the Federal Register that would have allowed hunting to continue within the park. The rule was written to become effective immediately. On October 9, 2003, the director received a letter from a law firm representing the Fund for Animals that questioned the legality of the interim final regulation. At the request of Senator Byrd’s staff, the Washington office prepared bill language for inclusion in the FY 2004 Interior Appropriations Bill to allow hunting to continue within the park while a final regulation was prepared.

The FY 2004 Final Interior Appropriations Bill, Section 150, contained language that directed that “The National Park Service shall issue a special regulation concerning continued hunting at New River Gorge National River in compliance with the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act, with opportunity for public comment, and shall also comply with the National Environmental Policy Act as appropriate. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the September 25, 2003

interim final rule authorizing continued hunting at New River Gorge National River shall be in effect until the final special regulation supersedes it.” Since the NPS was planning to begin a GMP in 2004, it was determined that the GMP would initiate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act by determining whether or not hunting was an appropriate activity for New River Gorge National River.

In preparation for the GMP, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences at Virginia Tech prepared an *Assessment of Hunting Impacts at New River Gorge National River, West Virginia* (Hooper et al, 2006). The assessment concluded that “hunting conducted in accordance with existing laws and regulations should have no adverse impact on the fauna and flora within the boundaries of New River Gorge.”

In consultation with the Solicitor’s Office of the Department of the Interior, NPS decided that the best way to determine whether or not hunting was an appropriate activity for New River Gorge National River was to evaluate a range of alternatives, including the elimination of hunting within the boundary of the park. As a part of its scoping process, NPS drafted alternatives for hunting, including elimination of hunting, and described them along with other aspects of the proposed alternatives in a newsletter dated October 22, 2007, which was mailed to 797 people or groups. The concepts for hunting alternatives were described as:

- Continuation of Existing Hunting Program
- Enhanced Hunting Program
- Modified Hunting Program
- Elimination of Hunting Program on NPS Lands within the Park

Under this latter option all land owned by the NPS within the park boundary would be closed to hunting. Hunting on private lands within the park boundary would continue to be governed by the hunting and fishing regulations of the WV DNR. The existing hunting program would be phased out over five years.

On November 6, 7 and 8, 2007, NPS held public scoping meetings on the proposed alternatives included in the October 2007 newsletter, in Hinton, Beckley and Fayetteville respectively. Almost 300 people attended a meeting, and the meetings were largely dominated by the hunting issue. Almost every commenter opposed the inclusion of an alternative that would eliminate hunting.

Within a few weeks of these public meetings, Congress took up the issue of hunting at New River Gorge National River, and legislation that would have changed the park’s authorizing legislation from “may allow hunting” to “shall allow hunting” passed the House of Representatives on March 4, 2008 (H.R. 5137). The Senate did not take up the bill, and the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress adjourned without passing the legislation. However, Congress’ interest in this issue continued, and Section 7115 of Public Law 111-11, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which was

signed into law on March 30, 2009, contains language that says “Section 1106 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 USC 460m-20) is amended in the first sentence by striking “may” and inserting “shall”.”

Hunting, which had been discretionary at New River Gorge until the passage of Public Law 111-11 in March 2009, is no longer discretionary but is now authorized. Title 36 CFR § 2.2(b)(4) provides: “Where hunting or trapping or both are authorized, such activities shall be conducted in accordance with Federal law and the laws of the State within whose exterior boundaries a park area or a portion thereof is located. Nonconflicting State laws are adopted as a part of these regulations.” In light of both Section 150 of the FY 2004 Final Interior Appropriations Act and Section 7115 of Public Law 111-11, the elimination of hunting on NPS lands within the proclamation boundary of New River Gorge National River is no longer viable. It is clearly Congress’ intent that hunting continues at the park, so the elimination of hunting alternative was considered but rejected.

## **2.10 Biking in the Park**

### **2.10.1 Background**

Portions of nine trails in the park are currently open to bicycles, providing access to a variety of places such as overlooks, the New River, and historic sites in the lower gorge (see Table 3.40). Many members of the public and park user groups have requested that the NPS consider designation of additional routes for biking in the park. In response to these concerns the NPS has considered and evaluated alternative actions for expansion of biking opportunities in the park as part of the alternatives analysis in this GMP/EIS.

### **2.10.2 Biking Alternatives Considered in this GMP/EIS**

#### **■ Biking Management Actions Proposed in Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)**

In Alternative 1 biking in the park would continue to be permitted on park administrative roads currently listed in the *New River Gorge National River Superintendent’s Compendium* (NPS 2007) (see Table 3.38). No other biking trails would be designated.

#### **■ Biking Management Actions Common to Alternatives 2 to 5**

The GMP alternatives evaluated in this GMP/EIS generally propose that additional biking opportunities could occur on new trails in the park generally as follows:

- in frontcountry zones, river corridor zones, historic resource zones, and park development zones – biking could occur on a variety of trail types
- in backcountry zones – biking could occur only on singletrack trails

- in historic resource, river corridor, and park development zones – biking could occur on a limited basis on a variety of trail types

No biking would be permitted in the Endless Wall area.

New biking trails would be designed and built specifically to minimize negative impacts to park resources (soils, water quality, vegetation, and archeological and historical sites, etc.) and visitor experiences. All new trails developed in backcountry zones – and even the majority of new trails developed in frontcountry zones – would be designed and maintained to a minimal width (mostly singletrack) so as to retain contiguous habitat and to prevent creation of fragmenting features. Any proposal for new trails or trail uses would be analyzed and evaluated for environmental, cultural, and visitor experience impacts before final approval.

#### ■ **Biking Management Actions Proposed in Alternative 2**

Alternative 2 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails listed in the preceding section (Biking Management Actions Common to Alternatives 2 to 5) subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 2 a possible new rail trail with biking access would be developed from Thurmond to Sewell.

#### ■ **Biking Management Actions Proposed in Alternative 3**

Alternative 3 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails as listed in the preceding section (Biking Management Actions Common to Alternatives 2 to 5) subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 3 possible new biking opportunities would include:

- a continuous trail open to biking from end to end of the park (the through park trail) composed of a combination of trail types (see Section 2.6.4)
- development of a new biking trail in the Highland-Backus frontcountry zone

#### ■ **Biking Management Actions Proposed in Alternative 4**

Alternative 4 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails listed in the preceding section (Biking Management Actions Common to Alternatives 2 to 5) subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 4 possible new biking opportunities would include:

- a new rail trail with biking access from Thurmond to Sewell
- development of a new biking trail in the Highland-Backus frontcountry zone
- development of a new rail trail with biking access from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (if and when the CSX Corman Line right-of-way is abandoned and acquired by the NPS)

■ **Biking Management Actions Proposed in Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)**

Alternative 5 would include potential joint hiking and biking use of existing and new trails listed in the preceding section (Biking Management Actions Common to Alternatives 2 to 5) subject to the general design principles identified for biking trails in Section 2.4.6 above. In addition, in Alternative 5 possible new biking opportunities would include:

- a continuous trail open to biking from end to end of the park (the through park connector) composed of a combination of trail types (see preceding section)
- development of stacked loop trails in the Bucklick Branch, Garden Ground, and Craig Branch areas
- development of new rail trails with biking access on railroad rights-of-way once they are abandoned and acquired by the NPS, including:
  - the CSX Corman line from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction
  - the CSX Meadow Creek line from Meadow Bridge to Meadow Creek
  - the CSX Piney Creek spur line along WV SR 41 from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont
- development of new trail connections between the three national park units, state parks, rail trails, and other attractions in the region through cooperation between the NPS and the park's gateway communities, state agencies and private landowners

### **2.10.3 Public Comments Received Related to Biking Alternatives**

The NPS has consulted the general public and park user groups interested in biking during development of the biking options.

In October 2007 a newsletter was sent to 797 people and groups on the park mailing list outlining the biking options under consideration and inviting the public to meetings for discussion of the GMP alternatives as well as the biking options.

On November 6, 7, and 8, 2007, public meetings on the proposed GMP alternatives included a presentation of the biking options under consideration and a question-and-answer session. Most comments related to biking supported addition of expanded biking in the park, particularly expansion of singletrack and stacked loop trails.

### **2.10.4 Future Biking Trail Planning and Promulgation of Special Regulations**

The final location of new biking trails would be identified in the biking component of the park's new trail management plan. The plan would be prepared for the preferred alternative as a planning effort subsequent to approval of the GMP/EIS

(see Section 2.13.1 below). Following completion of the plan a special regulation would be promulgated pursuant to 36 CFR Chapter 4 §4.30 adding the newly designated routes to the list of routes where biking is permitted in the Superintendent's Compendium.

## **2.11 Indicators and Standards**

User Capacity is one statutory requirement for the GMP established in the 1978 National Parks and Recreation Act. The Act called for the identification of and implementation commitments for visitor carrying capacities. The NPS GMP Sourcebook (2008) explains that planners have found that user capacity is a more appropriate term than visitor carrying capacity because it conveys the concept that capacity is applicable to all park users, including local residents. The NPS defines user capacity as the type and level of use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource conditions, social conditions, and visitor experiences consistent with the purposes of the park. The approach to user capacity is now focused on measuring the success at achieving and maintaining desired resource conditions and visitor experiences as affected by people's use of the parks. The NPS does not solely track and control user numbers, but instead manages the levels, types, behaviors, and patterns of visitor use and other public uses as needed to control the condition of the resources and the quality of the visitor experiences. The GMP planning process requires the development of a monitoring system to test the effectiveness of the management actions taken by identifying indicators and standards which gauge when or if the desired conditions have been achieved.

The user capacity decision making process can be summarized by the following major planning and management steps:

- establish desired conditions for resources, visitor experiences, and general levels of management, development, and access for different areas of the park
- identify indicators and standards to measure success at achieving desired conditions
- monitor existing conditions in relation to indicators and standards
- implement appropriate management actions to maintain or restore desired conditions and assess the effects of those actions taken

GMPs now include a general description of how indicators and standards will be monitored (to ensure they are feasible). The development of specific monitoring protocols is left to a detailed monitoring plan, which is beyond the scope of the GMP. The Indicators and Standards may require modification if new knowledge is gained about the efficacy of those selected during the GMP planning process.

The user capacity at the New River Gorge National River is affected by several factors largely outside the control of the National Park Service. The first involves the substantial amount of private land ownership and the inclusion of eight or more riverside communities within or immediately adjacent to the park boundary. These properties often provide numerous and uncontrolled private access to the river and lands within the park. The park has pursued the acquisition of park lands from willing sellers but complete ownership of all lands within the boundary is not expected. The NPS instead hopes to collaborate with the local governments and landowners to sustain the existing community character while protecting the natural, cultural, and scenic resources within the park.

Another factor with great potential to affect the amounts and types of visitation to the park involves several residential subdivisions in Fayette County. The developers expect full build-out within 20 years and include more than 2500 new homes located adjacent to the park and spread over some 10 miles in length. The new developments are likely to have substantial effects on visitation and may require substantial adjustments to park services and facilities.

The user capacity of the New River itself is also affected by the fact that commercial whitewater activities are regulated by the state of West Virginia. The West Virginia National Interest River Conservation Act of 1987 (PL 100-534) states, "...the Secretary of the Interior shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the state of West Virginia providing for the state's regulation, in accordance with state law, of persons providing commercial recreational watercraft services on units of the National Park System and components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System subject to this Act." The New River within the park boundary was designated a "whitewater zone" by the WV Whitewater Commission and includes three sections of the Upper New River and one section of the Lower New River. The sections include the Upper New River from Hinton to WV SR 41 at Prince, another section of the Upper New River from WV SR 41 (approximately the McCreery river access) to the railroad trestle at Thurmond, and the third section of the Upper New River from Thurmond to Manns Creek (just downstream of the Cunard river access), and the Lower New from Manns Creek to Teays Landing. The WV DNR was tasked with the regulation of approximately 20 commercial licenses and setting the maximum daily and yearly use limits. As the demand for whitewater recreation increased, the Whitewater Commission initiated a study in 1995 utilizing a Limits of Acceptable Change process to implement a "rational criteria" for river allocation for the WV whitewater industry. The report, however, did not address an allocation system which included the non-commercial boaters. While non-commercial use is not well documented, the NPS estimated the total amount of non-commercial use in 2007 to be about 31,466 users, which represents almost 20% of the total whitewater use. Congestion at the McCreery, Cunard, and Fayette Station river accesses involving commercial and non-commercial boaters has become an issue and concern for park management. These concerns will be addressed through



improvements in site design and capacity rather than an allocation system attempting to limit commercial and non-commercial use.

Further, the steady decline of commercial whitewater use since its peak in 1995 has driven a recent consolidation of outfitters. In 2008 ten of the largest outfitters consolidated into three large companies. Commercial outfitters hope to gain an economy of scale and also diversify and expand the experiences they offer the park visitors. These efforts are likely to change visitor use patterns throughout the park.

Based on some of the most pressing existing or potential use concerns at sites within New River Gorge National River, a set of five possible resource and visitor experience indicators have been identified for the park that may be monitored to assess visitor-related impacts on park resources and the quality of the visitor experience (see Table 2.33). The applicability of each indicator to management zones has also been identified. The final selection of any indicators and standards for monitoring purposes or the implementation of any management actions that affect use would comply with NEPA, NHPA, and other laws, regulations, and policy, as needed.

## **2.12 Mitigation Measures to be Included as Part of Future Actions Implementing the Preferred GMP Alternative**

Over the next 20 years as the NPS implements the actions associated with the preferred GMP alternative it must protect unimpaired the park's natural and cultural resources and the quality of the visitor experience. To ensure that this happens, a consistent set of mitigation measures would be applied to all management actions in the park. In the future the NPS would complete appropriate review of environmental impacts associated with management actions (i.e., those reviews required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and other relevant legislation). As part of the environmental reviews, the NPS would avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts of management actions when practicable. The implementation of a compliance-monitoring program would be within the parameters of NEPA and NHPA compliance documents, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits, etc. The compliance-monitoring program would oversee these mitigation measures and would include reporting protocols. The mitigation measures and best management practices that would generally be applied to avoid or minimize potential impacts from implementation of future management actions in the park are summarized in Table 2.34 below.

### **New River Gorge National River NPS Management Mandate**

*Future resource management and development of visitor facilities at New River Gorge National River will be implemented by the NPS in accordance with its congressional mandate to manage the lands under its stewardship "in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (NPS Organic Act, 16 USC 1).*

Table 2.33 Park User Capacity Indicators

Backcountry Zone			
	Resources/Values	Indicator	Standard
1	Contiguous forest habitat	Number and size (acres) of contiguous forest habitat and the number and size of fragmenting features	The number and size of contiguous forest habitat will be managed for no net loss and may be increased by reducing the number and size of fragmenting features
2	Recreation sites – including rock climbing areas, campsites, fishing areas in tributary streams	Recreation site condition assessment – rating of good, fair, poor based on site size, ground cover loss, damaged trees, amount of litter/human waste	The condition of key recreation sites will be maintained in “good condition”
3	Water quality in tributary streams	Fecal coliform bacteria density (colony forming units/100 ml)	Fecal coliform bacteria density does not exceed the West Virginia standard for water quality contact recreation (400 colony forming units/100 ml) in more than 10 percent of samples taken at any established monitoring station during a given year, nor does the average (geometric mean) of at least five samples taken within one year exceed 200 colony forming units/100 ml)
4	Visitor opportunities free of the sense of crowding or congestion	Number of encounters with other visitors per day	Visitors >90 percent of the time will report the number of encounters with other visitors as “low”
Frontcountry Zone			
	Resources/Values	Indicator	Standard
5	Contiguous forest habitat	Number and size (acres) of contiguous forest habitat and the number and size of fragmenting features	The number and size of contiguous forest habitat will be managed for no net loss and may be increased by reducing the number and size of fragmenting features.
6	Recreation sites – including rock climbing areas, campsites, fishing areas in tributary stream	Recreation site condition assessment – rating of good, fair, poor based on site size, ground cover loss, damaged trees, amount of litter/human waste	The condition of key recreation sites will be maintained in “good condition”
7	Water quality in tributary streams	Fecal coliform bacteria density (colony forming units/100 ml)	Fecal coliform bacteria density does not exceed the West Virginia standard for water quality contact recreation (400 colony forming units/100 ml) in more than 10 percent of samples taken at any established monitoring station during a given year, nor does the average (geometric mean) of at least five samples taken within one year exceed 200 colony forming units/100 ml)
8	Visitor opportunities free of the sense of crowding or congestion	Number of encounters with other visitors per day	Visitors >90 percent of the time will report the number of encounters with other visitors as “low” to “moderate”

**Table 2.33 Park User Capacity Indicators**

Historic Resource Zone		
Resources/Values	Indicator	Standard
9 Contiguous riparian/forest habitat	Number and size (acres) of contiguous riparian/forest habitat and the number and size of fragmenting features	The number and size and contiguous riparian/forest habitat will be managed for no net loss and may be increased by reducing the number and size of fragmenting features
10 Water quality in New River and its tributary streams	Fecal coliform bacteria density (colony forming units/100 ml)	Fecal coliform bacteria density does not exceed the West Virginia standard for water contact recreation (400 colony forming units/100 ml) in more than 10 percent of samples taken at any established monitoring station during a given year, nor does the average (geometric mean) of at least five samples taken within one year exceed 200 colony forming units/100 ml)
11 Recreation sites – including river lunch stops, camping and fishing areas	Recreation site condition assessment – rating of good, fair, poor based on site size, ground cover loss, damaged trees, amount of litter/human waste	The condition of key recreation sites will be maintained in “good condition”
River Corridor Zone		
Resources/Values	Indicator	Standard
12 Cultural resources – including coal, railroad, settlement, archeological, ethnographic resources, and museum collections (emphasis on stabilization, rehabilitation, and development for improved visitor experience and public use of sites)	Change in site condition/integrity (measured through List of Classified Structures, Cultural Landscape Inventory, and ASMIS protocols) rating is good, fair, poor, considering factors such as vandalism, vehicle disturbance, commercial activities, and new developments	All properties will be managed in “good condition”
13 Visitor services and facilities	Visitor satisfaction with the scale, location, and condition of visitor services and facilities	Greater than 90 percent of all visitors surveyed report “high” levels of satisfaction with the scale, location, and condition of visitor services and facilities
Park Development Zone		
Resources/Values	Indicator	Standard
14 Water quality in New River and its tributary streams	Fecal coliform bacteria density (colony forming units/100 ml)	Fecal coliform bacteria density does not exceed the West Virginia standard for water contact recreation (400 colony forming units/100 ml) in more than 10 percent of samples taken at any established monitoring station during a given year, nor does the average (geometric mean) of at least five samples taken within one year exceed 200 colony forming units/100 ml)
15 Visitor services and facilities	Visitor satisfaction with the scale, location, and condition of visitor services and facilities	Greater than 90 percent of all visitors surveyed report “high” levels of satisfaction with the scale, location, and condition of visitor services and facilities

**Table 2.34 Mitigation Measures to be Included as Part of Future Actions Implementing the Preferred GMP Alternative**

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to develop inventories for and oversee research about archeological, historic, and ethnographic resources to better understand and manage the resources, including historic and ethnographic cultural landscapes. Conduct any needed archeological or other resource specific surveys, prepare national register evaluations, and identify recommended treatments. Incorporate the results of these efforts into the park's resource stewardship strategy and site-specific planning and compliance documents. Continue to manage cultural resources and museum collections following federal regulations and NPS guidelines and Director's Order 24, "Museum collections Management", Director's Order 28 "Cultural Resource Management", NPS 28 "Cultural Resource Management", and NPS 28A "Cultural Resource Management". Inventory the park's collection and keep museum collections in a manner that would meet NPS curatorial standards.</li> <li>■ Follow site-specific planning and compliance procedures, in accordance with the <i>Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation</i>. Locate projects in previously disturbed or existing developed areas to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to archeological resources. Use screening and/or sensitive design that would be compatible with historic resources and cultural landscapes and avoid development adjacent to ethnographic resources. If adverse impacts could not be avoided, these impacts would be mitigated by strategies determined through a consultation process with all interested parties.</li> <li>■ Conduct archeological site monitoring and routine protection. Conduct data recovery excavations at archeological sites threatened with destruction, where protection or site avoidance during design and construction is infeasible. Strictly adhere to NPS standards and guidelines on the display and care of artifacts. This would include artifacts used in exhibits in the visitor center. Irreplaceable items would be kept above the 500-year floodplain.</li> <li>■ Mitigating measures for structures and landscapes include documentation according to standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscape Survey (HABS/HAER/HALS) and in accordance with the Secretary's Standards and Guidelines for Historical and Archaeological Documentation. The level of this documentation, which includes photography, archeological data recovery, and/or a narrative history, would depend on significance (national, state, or local) and individual attributes (an individually significant structure, individual elements of a cultural landscape, etc.) and be determined in consultation with the state historic preservation officer, tribal historic preservation officer(s), local community (ies), and/or other interested parties. When demolition of a historic structure is proposed, and following thorough documentation, architectural elements, and objects may be salvaged for reuse in rehabilitating similar structures, or they may be added to the park's museum collection. In addition, the historical alteration of the human environment and reasons for that alteration would be interpreted to national park visitors.</li> <li>■ Continue ongoing consultations with culturally associated groups and American Indian tribes. Protect sensitive traditional use areas to the extent feasible by avoiding or mitigating impacts on the ethnographic resources and continuing to provide access to traditional use and spiritual areas. Mitigation could include identification of and assistance in accessing alternative resource gathering areas and screening new development from traditional use areas.</li> <li>■ Encourage visitors through the park's interpretive programs to respect and leave undisturbed any inadvertently encountered archeological resources as well as to respect and leave undisturbed any offerings placed by American Indians.</li> </ul>
<b>Water Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To prevent water pollution during construction, use erosion control measures, minimize discharge to water bodies, and regularly inspect construction equipment for leaks of petroleum and other chemicals. Minimize use of heavy equipment in a waterway.</li> <li>■ Build a runoff filtration system to minimize water pollution from larger parking areas.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.34 Mitigation Measures to be Included as Part of Future Actions Implementing the Preferred GMP Alternative**

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure
<b>Wetlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Delineate wetlands by qualified NPS staff or certified wetland specialists and clearly mark the wetlands before construction work.</li> <li>■ Perform construction activities in a cautious manner to prevent damage caused by equipment, erosion, siltation, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Soils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Build new facilities on soils suitable for development.</li> <li>■ Minimize soil erosion by limiting the time that soil is left exposed and by applying other erosion control measures, such as erosion matting, silt fencing, and sedimentation basins in construction areas to reduce erosion, surface scouring, and discharge to water bodies.</li> <li>■ Once work is completed, revegetate construction areas with native plants in a timely period.</li> </ul>
<b>Nonnative (Exotic) Species</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement a noxious weed control program. Standard measures could include the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure construction-related equipment arrives on-site free of mud or seed-bearing material</li> <li>- certify all seeds and straw material are weed-free</li> <li>- identify areas of noxious weeds pre-construction</li> <li>- treat noxious weeds or noxious weed topsoil before construction (e.g., topsoil segregation, storage, herbicide treatment)</li> <li>- revegetate with appropriate native species</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Threatened and Endangered Species and Species of Concern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mitigation actions would occur during normal park operations as well as before, during, and after construction to minimize immediate and long-term impacts on rare, threatened, and endangered species. These actions would vary by specific project and area of the park affected, and additional mitigation would be added depending on the specific action and location. Many of the measures listed above for vegetation and wildlife would also benefit rare, threatened, and endangered species by helping to preserve habitat. Mitigation actions specific to rare, threatened, and endangered species would include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conduct surveys for rare, threatened, and endangered species as warranted</li> <li>- locate and design facilities/actions to avoid adverse effects on rare, threatened, and endangered species – if avoidance is infeasible, minimize and compensate for adverse effects on rare, threatened, and endangered species as appropriate and in consultation with the appropriate resource agencies - conduct work outside of critical periods for the specific species.</li> <li>- develop and implement restoration and/or monitoring plans as warranted – plans should include methods for implementation, performance standards, monitoring criteria, and adaptive management techniques</li> <li>- implement measures to reduce adverse effects of non-native plants and wildlife on rare, threatened, and endangered species</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Vegetation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Monitor areas used by visitors (e.g., trails) for signs of native vegetation disturbance – use public education, native plants to revegetate disturbed areas, erosion control measures, and barriers to control potential impacts on plants from trail erosion or social trailing.</li> <li>■ Designate river access/crossing points, and use barriers and closures to prevent trampling and loss of riparian vegetation.</li> <li>■ Develop revegetation plans for the disturbed area and require the use of native species – revegetation plans should specify seed/plant source, seed/plant mixes, soil preparation, etc. Salvage vegetation should be used to the extent possible.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.34 Mitigation Measures to be Included as Part of Future Actions Implementing the Preferred GMP Alternative**

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure
<b>Wildlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employ techniques to reduce impacts on wildlife, including visitor education programs, restrictions on visitor activities, and park ranger patrols.</li> <li>■ Implement a natural resource protection program. Standard measures would include construction scheduling, biological monitoring, erosion and sediment control, the use of fencing or other means to protect sensitive resources adjacent to construction, the removal of all food-related items or rubbish, topsoil salvage, and revegetation. This could include specific construction monitoring by resource specialists as well as treatment and reporting procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Air quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement a dust abatement program. Standard dust abatement measures could include the following elements: water or otherwise stabilize soils, cover haul trucks, employ speed limits on unpaved roads, minimize vegetation clearing, and revegetate after construction.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Safety and Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement a traffic control plan, as warranted. Standard measures include strategies to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow during the construction period.</li> <li>■ Implement measures to reduce adverse effects of construction on visitor safety and experience.</li> <li>■ Implement an interpretation and education program. Continue directional signs and education programs to promote understanding among park visitors.</li> <li>■ Conduct an accessibility study to understand barriers to park programs and facilities – based on this study, implement a strategy to provide the maximum level of accessibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement a spill prevention and pollution control program for hazardous materials. Standard measures could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hazardous materials storage and handling procedures</li> <li>- spill containment, cleanup, and reporting procedures;</li> <li>- limitation of refueling and other hazardous activities to upland/non-sensitive sites</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Soundscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement standard noise abatement measures during park operations and construction. Standard noise abatement measures could include the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a schedule that minimizes impacts on adjacent noise-sensitive uses</li> <li>- use of the best available noise control techniques wherever feasible</li> <li>- use of hydraulically or electrically powered impact tools when feasible</li> <li>- location of stationary noise sources as far from sensitive uses as possible</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Site and design facilities to minimize objectionable noise.</li> <li>■ Explore options to reduce the sounds of maintenance equipment.</li> </ul>

## 2.13 Needed Future Plans

### 2.13.1 Trail Management Plan

Future development and management of the park's trail system would occur in accordance with a new trail management plan that the NPS would prepare following completion of the GMP/EIS. Trails would be planned and developed as an integral part of the park's transportation system and incorporate principles of universal design. All trails would be located, designed, and managed to: 1) reduce conflicts with automobiles and incompatible uses, 2) allow for a satisfying park experience, 3) allow accessibility by the greatest number of people, and 4) protect park resources. The trails plan would contain specific, measurable management objectives related to trail development and use. The plan would also consider a wide range of techniques in managing trail use to avoid adverse impacts

on park resources, values, or desired visitor experiences. In formulating the plan the Superintendent would be permitted to designate specific areas for trail use and/or impose local restrictions, use limits, and closures. Management measures would be consistent with the desired condition decisions made in the GMP/EIS. The NPS would also cooperate with other land managers, nonprofit organizations, and user groups to facilitate local and regional trail access to the park. The plan would be supported by appropriate documentation of compliance with NEPA and NHPA and would be developed with public involvement.

### **2.13.2 Camping Management Plan**

Future development and management of camping in the park would occur in accordance with a new camping management plan that the NPS would prepare following completion of the GMP/EIS. The camping management plan would provide for a variety of experiences ranging from primitive backcountry camping to developed frontcountry camping. The plan would address management issues regarding designated versus undesignated camping, use of fire pans, wastewater treatment, and water supply. It would contain specific, measurable management objectives related to development and use of camping facilities in the park. The plan would also consider a wide range of techniques in managing camping use to avoid adverse impacts on park resources, values, or desired visitor experiences. In formulating the plan the Superintendent would be permitted to designate specific areas for camping use and/or impose local restrictions, use limits, and closures. Management measures would be consistent with the desired condition decisions made in the GMP/EIS. The camping management plan would be supported by appropriate documentation of compliance with NEPA and NHPA and would be developed with public involvement.

During completion of the camping management plan the NPS would also consider charging fees for camping and instituting a reservation system. A camping fee would enable the NPS to provide a higher level of customer service and would benefit visitors. As the NPS considers the establishment of a fee program, it would engage the public and obtain input from Congressional delegations and local, county, state, and federal officials, as well as the local Chambers of Commerce, commercial tour operators, and the general public.

### **2.13.3 Resource Stewardship Strategy**

The NPS would complete a Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS). This would be a long-term plan – with an expected life on the order of 20 years – which would address how the park would achieve its desired natural and cultural resource conditions as described in this GMP.

The RSS would evaluate the park's fundamental and other important resources and values (see Section 1.7.3 above and NPS 2007a) and identify the following:

- the major components of the park's fundamental and other important resources and values that must be protected in the future
- how to evaluate success in protecting those resources
- measurable targets for success
- a comprehensive strategic plan for achieving and maintaining the targets for success

As a program planning document, the RSS would serve as a link between the park's GMP and its strategic planning, helping to allocate the park's personnel and financial resources to implement resource stewardship actions.

## **2.14 Cost Comparison**

### **2.14.1 Estimated Costs for Implementing the Plan**

Table 2.35 presents a summary of the annual operating and one-time costs for the five GMP alternatives. The cost figures are provided here and throughout the plan only to provide an estimate of the relative costs of the alternatives. The following statements apply to the cost estimates:

- the costs are presented as estimates (in 2009 dollars) and are not appropriate for budgeting purposes
- the estimates presented have been developed using NPS and industry standards to the extent available
- specific costs will be determined at a later date, considering the design of facilities, identification of detailed resource protection needs, and changing visitor expectations
- actual costs to the NPS will vary depending on if and when the actions are implemented, and on contributions by partners and volunteers
- approval of the GMP/EIS does not guarantee that funding or staffing for proposed actions will be available
- the implementation of the approved plan, no matter which alternative is selected, will depend on future NPS funding levels and service-wide priorities, and on partnership funds, time, and effort

### **2.14.2 Funding for Actions Identified in the GMP**

The NPS develops 5-year deferred maintenance and capital improvement plans. These plans are developed by a systematic process of evaluating proposals from the field to determine which projects are of greatest need in priority order focusing on critical health and safety issues and critical resource protection requirements. Actions that add specific projects to the 5-year plans inevitably result in other projects being displaced when budgets are limited.



**Table 2.35 Alternatives Cost Comparison (2009 dollars)**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 3</b>	<b>Alternative 4</b>	<b>Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<b>NPS Annual Operating Costs<sup>1</sup></b>	\$13,350,000	\$15,570,000	\$15,740,000	\$15,570,000	\$15,820,000
<b>NPS Staffing – FTE<sup>2</sup></b>	160	186	188	186	189
<b>Total One-Time NPS Costs<sup>3</sup></b>	\$16,200,000	\$27,350,000	\$28,700,000	\$29,300,000	\$29,670,000
NPS Facility Costs <sup>4</sup>	\$15,380,000	\$23,000,000	\$27,700,000	\$27,500,000	\$27,800,000
NPS Non- Facility Costs <sup>5</sup>	\$820,000	\$4,350,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,870,000
<b>Other Costs</b>	See note 6	See note 6	See note 6	See note 6	See note 6

1. NPS annual operating costs are the total NPS costs per year for maintenance and operations associated with each alternative, including: utilities, supplies, staff salaries and benefits, leasing, and other materials. Cost and staffing estimates assume the alternative is fully implemented as described in Sections 2.2.11, 2.5.9, 2.6.9, 2.7.9, and 2.8.9 above.
2. The total number of full-time equivalents (FTE) is the number of NPS person-years of staff required to maintain the assets of the park at a good level, provide acceptable visitor services, protect resources, and generally support the park's operations. The FTE number indicates funded NPS staff only, not volunteer positions or positions funded by partners. FTE salaries and benefits are included in the annual operating costs. The general duties of existing and proposed staff are described for each alternative in Sections 2.2.11, 2.5.9, 2.6.9, 2.7.9, and 2.8.9 above.
3. Total one-time NPS costs equal the sum of facility costs, non-facility costs, and other costs.
4. One-time NPS facility costs include those for design, construction, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse of NPS facilities, including visitor centers, roads, parking areas, administrative facilities, comfort stations, educational facilities, entrance stations, fire stations, maintenance facilities, museum collections facilities, and other visitor facilities. These are described for each alternative in Sections 2.2.11, 2.5.9, 2.6.9, 2.7.9, and 2.8.9 above.
5. One-time NPS non-facility costs include those for the preservation of cultural or natural resources not related to facilities, the development of visitor use tools not related to facilities, and other park management activities that would require substantial funding above the park annual operating costs. These are described for each alternative in Sections 2.2.11, 2.5.9, 2.6.9, 2.7.9, and 2.8.9 above.
6. The New River Parkway would be a 10-mile, two-lane scenic parkway road connecting I-64 with Sandstone Falls, other NPS cultural and recreation areas and the southern gateway community of Hinton. The parkway has been the subject of a 20-year planning process, which culminated in a signed and approved record of decision (ROD) in February 2004. The cost of the road has escalated from approximately \$6 million to a current estimate of \$130 million. The cost is expected to be borne by the Federal Highway Administration and the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Capital development, maintenance, and staffing proposals in this GMP/EIS would be evaluated in light of competing priorities for New River Gorge National River and other units of the national park system. Because emphasis in the budget process is currently placed on addressing needs to maintain existing infrastructure, funding for new development is not likely within the next five years. However, the potential for implementing development and operational proposals in this plan may be improved if funding is available from partnerships that do not rely on the NPS's budget.

## 2.15 Comparison of Alternatives

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
<b>Visitor Experience and Visitor Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors would have classic park experiences as they currently exist at Sandstone Falls, Sandstone Visitor Center, Grandview, Thurmond, Endless Wall, Kaymoor, Nuttallburg, Canyon Rim, and Fayette Station Road</li> <li>Other important experiences that visitors would have would remain largely as they are today, focused on existing attractions and visitor facilities</li> <li>Improvements associated with the future New River Parkway would greatly enhance access, visitor facilities, and the experiences visitors may have in the south end of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural resources and interpretive experiences would be emphasized in themed areas in the north and south ends of the park; primitive recreation would be emphasized in the middle of the park</li> <li>Actions to enhance the classic park experiences would occur at Endless Wall, Fayette Station Road, and Sandstone Falls</li> <li>Improvements associated with the future New River Parkway would greatly enhance access, visitor facilities, and the experiences visitors may have in the south end of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation, scenic experiences, and discovery of cultural resources would be emphasized along a new through park trail</li> <li>Actions to enhance the classic park experiences would occur at Endless Wall, Fayette Station Road, and Thurmond</li> <li>Improvements associated with the future New River Parkway would greatly enhance access, visitor facilities, and the experiences visitors may have in the south end of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural and recreation resources and experiences would be emphasized in proximity to gateways and along rim to river trails and roads</li> <li>Actions to enhance the classic park experiences would occur at Endless Wall, Fayette Station Road, and Thurmond</li> <li>Improvements associated with the future New River Parkway would greatly enhance access, visitor facilities, and the experiences visitors may have in the south end of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primitive recreation experiences would be emphasized throughout the park along a new through park connector; river gateways and focal areas would be managed for a broad variety of interpretive and recreational experiences</li> <li>Actions to enhance the visitor classic park experiences would occur at Endless Wall, Fayette Station Road, Thurmond, and Sandstone Falls</li> <li>Improvements associated with the future New River Parkway would greatly enhance access, visitor facilities, and the experiences visitors may have in the south end of the park</li> </ul>
<b>Maintaining Natural Processes and Restoring Natural Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing natural resource management programs would continue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 68.5% (49,000 acres) of the park would be managed as large contiguous tracts of intact unfragmented backcountry forest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 43% (30,750 acres) of the park would be managed as large contiguous tracts of intact unfragmented backcountry forest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 60.8% (43,500 acres) of the park would be managed as large contiguous tracts of intact unfragmented backcountry forest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 66.4% (47,500 acres) of the park would be managed as large contiguous tracts of intact unfragmented backcountry forest</li> </ul>
<b>Water Quality Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS would continue to collect ambient water quality data for the New River and many tributaries</li> <li>NPS would continue to provide technical assistance to local communities, public service districts, and groups involved with water quality management</li> <li>At Thurmond, community water and wastewater management systems would be developed to serve both NPS facilities and all existing occupied private development</li> <li>Sanitary facilities would continue to be provided at most developed visitor facilities</li> <li>River rest stops and other sites in remote areas would continue to have few or no sanitary facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS would continue to collect ambient water quality data for the New River and many tributaries; as funding permits, the water quality monitoring program would be expanded to: 1) include most tributaries to the New River, 2) to increase sampling frequency, 3) to increase monitoring during high flows</li> <li>NPS would continue to provide technical assistance to local communities, public service districts, and groups involved with water quality management</li> <li>At Thurmond, community water and wastewater management systems would be developed to serve both NPS facilities and all existing and new occupied private development</li> <li>Availability of sanitary facilities would be expanded at 1) all developed visitor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		<p>facilities, and 2) in remote areas of the park where visitor use is high</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical assistance to local communities, public service districts, and groups involved with water quality management would be expanded</li> <li>Public education and technical assistance would be provided regarding maintenance of on-site disposal systems in tributary watersheds</li> <li>Where practicable, make excess capacity in park wastewater treatment facilities available for treatment of wastewater flows from adjoining neighborhoods</li> </ul>			
<b>Cultural Resource Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmsteads in the south end of the park would be managed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farmhouses would be stabilized</li> <li>outbuildings would be maintained in period condition</li> <li>farm fields, fence lines, and orchards would be maintained</li> <li>farmland would be leased for agriculture</li> <li>as properties in the Richmond Bottom area and at Westfall Farm, are acquired or otherwise protected, modern structures would be removed</li> <li>remaining buildings at the Harrah Homestead would be stabilized</li> </ul> </li> <li>Prince Brothers General Store would be stabilized</li> <li>Contamination at Thurmond Commercial Row structures would be remediated and the structures stabilized</li> <li>Nationally significant industrial resources would be stabilized at the Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg town site</li> <li>A new storage facility for the park's museum collections would be constructed</li> <li>Infrequently used items in the park's collection would be moved to a regional storage facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmsteads in the south end of the park would tell early settlement/ agricultural stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>representative farmhouses and outbuildings would be restored</li> <li>the cultural landscape associated with restored farmhouses would be red</li> </ul> </li> <li>Industrial resources in the north end of the park would tell mining, lumbering, and railroading stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at Thurmond, Commercial Row buildings would be rehabilitated and leased, representative historic houses would be restored, other viable houses would be rehabilitated and leased (for commercial use, park housing, dormitory housing, or visitor lodging), and remaining structures would be stabilized</li> <li>several industrial sites (app. 5) would be managed as discovery sites</li> </ul> </li> <li>Camp Brookside would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused (in partnership with an educational institution)</li> <li>Discovery sites (approx. 5 along trails and roads in the middle of the park would be managed and interpreted to tell the park's railroading stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discovery sites (from 30 to 35 sites) along the through park trail, other trails, and park roads would be managed and interpreted to tell the park's early settlement/ agricultural and industrial stores related to mining, lumbering, and railroading</li> <li>Farmsteads in the south end of the park would be rehabilitated and leased through the NPS historic leasing program</li> <li>At Thurmond, the remaining historic structures would be stabilized (maintaining the exteriors only)</li> <li>Nationally significant industrial resources would be stabilized at the Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg town site</li> <li>A new storage facility for the park's museum collections would be constructed</li> <li>Infrequently used items in the park's collection would be moved to a regional storage facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural resources in river gateways and in the south end of the park would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused through the NPS historic leasing program, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>representative farmhouses in the southern end of the park would be rehabilitated and leased</li> </ul> </li> <li>Prince Brothers General Store would be rehabilitated and leased</li> <li>at Thurmond, Commercial Row buildings and houses in good condition would be rehabilitated and leased (for commercial use, park housing, dormitory housing, or visitor lodging); other structures would be restored (on the exterior only)</li> <li>The cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store would be restored</li> <li>Discovery sites (from 20 to 25 sites) along trails at and near river gateways, and along rim to river trails, would be managed and interpreted to tell the park's early settlement/ agricultural and industrial stores related to mining, lumbering, and railroading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural resources in river gateways would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused through the NPS historic leasing program, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prince Brothers General Store would be rehabilitated and leased</li> <li>the cultural landscape at the Prince Brothers General Store would be restored</li> <li>at Thurmond, Commercial Row buildings and houses in good condition would be rehabilitated and leased (for commercial use, park housing, dormitory housing, or visitor lodging); other structures would be restored (on the exterior only)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Farmsteads in the south end of the park would tell early settlement/ agricultural stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richmond-Hamilton Farm, its outbuildings, and associated cultural landscape would be restored</li> <li>buildings at other farm would be rehabilitated and leased; fields at other farms would be rehabilitated and leased</li> <li>as properties in the Richmond Bottom area and at Westfall Farm areas are</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationally significant industrial resources would be stabilized at the Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg town site</li> <li>A new storage facility for the park's museum collections would be constructed</li> <li>Infrequently used items in the park's collection would be moved to a regional storage facility</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationally significant industrial resources would be stabilized at the Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg town site</li> <li>A new storage facility for the park's museum collections would be constructed</li> <li>Infrequently used items in the park's collection would be moved to a regional storage facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acquired or otherwise protected, the cultural landscape would be rehabilitated</li> <li>some farm fields would be planted in warm season grasses and managed to encourage open land birds</li> <li>Camp Brookside would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused (in partnership with an educational institution)</li> <li>Discovery sites (from 30 to 35 sites) along the through park connector, trails at or near river gateways, and from rim to river trails would be managed and interpreted to tell the park's early settlement/agricultural and industrial stores related to mining, lumbering, and railroading</li> <li>Nationally significant industrial resources would be stabilized at the Nuttallburg Mining Complex and Nuttallburg town site</li> <li>A new storage facility for the park's museum collections would be constructed</li> <li>Infrequently used items in the park's collection would be moved to a regional storage facility</li> </ul>
<b>Protecting Scenic Resources in and around the Gorge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS would seek to avoid or minimize impacts of land development on outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborating with landowners would seek to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts of land development proposals on outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge</li> <li>seeking to be involved early on in the development review process when lands with outstanding scenic values are proposed for development</li> <li>providing comments on proposed development projects with potential adverse impacts on outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions as proposed in Alternative 1</li> <li>NPS would undertake additional actions to protect outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coordinating with owners of land possessing outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge in advance of decisions to develop their land</li> <li>greatly expanding coordination and technical assistance to avoid or minimize adverse impacts of land development on outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge</li> <li>coordinating with professionals providing services to owners of lands with outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions as proposed in Alternative 1</li> <li>NPS would undertake additional actions to protect outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge (as in Alternative 2)</li> <li>Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources from the new through park trail as well as from a number of new shorter trails in the middle of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions as proposed in Alternative 1</li> <li>NPS would undertake additional actions to protect outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge (as in Alternative 2)</li> <li>Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources throughout the park from numerous new rim to river trails and from numerous new trails in the vicinity of river gateways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions as proposed in Alternative 1</li> <li>NPS would undertake additional actions to protect outstanding scenic values in and around the gorge (as in Alternative 2)</li> <li>Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources throughout the park from the new through park connector, from numerous new rim-to river trails, and from numerous new trails in the vicinity of river gateways</li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors would have new opportunities to experience the park's scenic resources along several new trails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the south, a new farm loop trail would provide scenic views of the upper river gorge, the pastoral landscape, and cultural landscapes at the park's early settlement farms</li> <li>in the north, new trails to industrial sites would provide scenic views of the lower gorge and cultural landscapes illustrative of the park's industrial heritage</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<b>Hiking and Equestrian Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hiking trails would be added in the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hiking trails would be added in the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area (as in Alt. 1)</li> <li>New trails would be added to improve access to rock climbing areas in the Endless Wall, Sunshine Buttress, Bubba City, and Junkyard areas</li> <li>New equestrian loop trail would be added in the Craig Branch area</li> <li>The Laing Loop Nature Trail would be expanded</li> <li>New trails would provide access to cultural resources in the south and north ends of the park, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fayette Mine trail</li> <li>Stone Cliff Mine trail</li> <li>a trail from Stone Cliff Mine to the Stone Cliff coke ovens</li> <li>Thurmond to Sewell rail trail</li> <li>farm loop trail in southern end of the park</li> <li>Sandstone Boardwalk expansion</li> </ul> </li> <li>Trailheads would be provided for all new trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hiking trails would be added in the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area (as in Alt. 1)</li> <li>New trails would be added to improve access to rock climbing areas in the Endless Wall, Sunshine Buttress, Bubba City, and Junkyard areas</li> <li>New equestrian loop trail would be added in the Bucklick Branch area</li> <li>The Laing Loop Nature Trail would be expanded</li> <li>A new through park trail would enable visitors to travel from end to end of the park via a hiking/biking trail</li> <li>New trails would provide better access to the middle part of the park (generally using existing unmaintained trails), such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a trail from Sandstone Visitor Center to Prince (on river right)</li> <li>a new trail along Davis Branch (in the Meadow Creek North area)</li> <li>new trails in the Highland-Backus area</li> <li>a new trail from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> </ul> </li> <li>Trailheads would be provided for all new trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hiking trails would be added in the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area (as in Alt. 1)</li> <li>New trails would be added to improve access to rock climbing areas in the Endless Wall, Sunshine Buttress, Bubba City, and Junkyard areas</li> <li>New equestrian loop trails would be added in the Bucklick Branch area</li> <li>The Laing Loop Nature Trail would be expanded</li> <li>New trails would provide rim to river experiences, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from Sandstone Visitor Center to Hump Mountain</li> <li>from Grandview to Mill Creek</li> <li>from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock</li> <li>from Trump-Lilly to Richmond-Hamilton Farm</li> <li>from Cloverdale Road to Upper Glade Creek Trail</li> <li>from Garden Ground to the New River</li> <li>from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (rail trail once rail is abandoned)</li> <li>from GW Carver to Keeney Creek</li> <li>from the rim to the river along Fire Creek</li> </ul> </li> <li>New trails would provide experiences in and around river gateways, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from Terry Beach to Stone Cliff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hiking trails would be added in the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area (as in Alt. 1)</li> <li>New trails would be added to improve access to rock climbing areas in the Endless Wall, Sunshine Buttress, Bubba City, and Junkyard areas</li> <li>New equestrian loop trails would be added in the Chestnut Mountain, Bucklick Branch, and Craig Branch areas</li> <li>The Laing Loop Nature Trail would be expanded</li> <li>A new through park connector would enable visitors to travel from end to end of the park via a combination of trail and road segments</li> <li>A new loop trail along both sides of the river from the new New River Parkway Bridge to Hawks Nest Dam</li> <li>New trails would provide rim to river experiences, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>farm loop trail in the south end of the park</li> <li>from Sandstone Visitor Center to Hump Mountains</li> <li>from Grandview to Mill Creek</li> <li>from Army Camp to Pinnacle Rock</li> <li>from Cloverdale Road to Upper Glade Creek Trail</li> <li>from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (rail trail once rail is abandoned)</li> <li>from Meadow Bridge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- from Thurmond to Sewell</li> <li>- new trails in the Highland-Backus area</li> <li>- from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> <li>- from WV SR 82 to the New River Bridge staging area</li> <li>- from Stone Cliff Mine to the Stone Cliff coke ovens</li> <li>- to the Beauty Mountain Overlook</li> <li>- from Keeney Creek Road to Keeney Creek Beach</li> <li>■ Trailheads would be provided for all new trail:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to Meadow Creek (rail trail once rail is abandoned)</li> <li>- from Stanford to Prince/Quinnimont (rail trail once rail is abandoned)</li> <li>- from GW Carver to Keeney Creek</li> <li>■ New trails would provide experiences in and around river gateways, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to Fayette Mine</li> <li>- from Thurmond to Sewell</li> <li>- along Davis Branch (in the Meadow Creek North area)</li> <li>- from Dowdy Creek to Highland Mountain</li> <li>- from Stone Cliff Mine to the Stone Cliff coke ovens</li> <li>- to the Beauty Mountain Overlook</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Trailheads would be provided for all new trails</li> <li>■ Cooperation between NPS and the park's gateway communities, state agencies, and private landowners would seek to develop new trail connections between the three national park units, state parks, rail trails, and other attractions</li> </ul>
<b>Biking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Biking in the park would continue on administrative roads currently listed in the <i>Superintendent's Compendium</i> (NPS 2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A new trail management plan would identify where joint use hiking and biking trails would be developed in the park, subject to the following guidelines:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- biking could occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones, river corridor zones, and park development zones</li> <li>- biking could occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ A new rail trail with biking access would be developed from Thurmond to Sewell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A new trail management plan would identify where joint use hiking and biking trails would be developed in the park, subject to the following guidelines:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- biking could occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones, river corridor zones, and park development zones</li> <li>- biking could occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ A new through park trail would be developed; it would be a joint use hiking and biking trail; it would enable visitors to bike from end to end of the park</li> <li>■ A new biking trail would be developed in the Highland-Backus area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A new trail management plan would identify where joint use hiking and biking trails would be developed in the park, subject to the following guidelines:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- biking could occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones, river corridor zones, and park development zones</li> <li>- biking could occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ A new biking trails would be developed in the Highland-Backus area</li> <li>■ A new rail trail with biking access would be developed from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction (once rail is abandoned)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A new trail management plan would identify where joint use hiking and biking trails would be developed in the park, subject to the following guidelines:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- biking could occur on a variety of trail types in frontcountry zones, river corridor zones, and park development zones</li> <li>- biking could occur only on singletrack trails in backcountry zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ The new through park connector would be developed; it would be a joint use hiking and biking route with some road sections where vehicles would be present; it would enable visitors to bike from end to end of the park</li> <li>■ New stacked loop trails for biking would be developed in:</li> </ul>

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Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bucklick Branch</li> <li>- Garden Ground</li> <li>- Craig Branch</li> <li>■ Glade Creek Trail would be open to biking</li> <li>■ Rail trails with biking access would be developed (once rail is abandoned):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- from Mt. Hope to Southside Junction</li> <li>- from Meadow Bridge to Meadow Creek</li> <li>- from Stanaford to Prince/Quinnimont</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Cooperation between NPS and the park's gateway communities, state agencies, and private landowners would seek to develop new trail connections between the three national park units, state parks, rail trails, and other attractions</li> </ul>
<b>Hunting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hunting would continue in accordance with WV DNR regulations</li> <li>■ A few areas would continue to be closed to hunting for safety reasons, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- safety zones designated in the park compendium (NPS 2007)</li> <li>- areas within historic boundaries of Grandview State Park and Sandstone Falls State Park</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	■ Same as Alternative 1	■ Same as Alternative 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hunting would continue in accordance with WV DNR regulations largely as it is today</li> <li>■ Some activities would be phased out over a 5-year period, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hunting of native "pest" species</li> <li>- use of hunting dogs outside of applicable season for training</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ New collaborative actions by NPS and WV DNR would include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitoring or park specific game harvest levels and hunter use levels using a voluntary reporting system</li> <li>- implementation of a cooperative game management plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hunting would continue in accordance with WV DNR regulations largely as it is today</li> <li>■ Exceptions would include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the historic Grandview State Park area would be opened to limited bow hunting</li> <li>- upland gamebird habitat would be increased in some historic resource zones</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ As in Alternative 4, new collaborative actions by NPS and WV DNR would be implemented</li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrian Access across Railroad Rights-of-Way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible</li> <li>■ Effort would be aimed at securing legal crossings where illegal crossing occur most frequently, such as at Hinton, Depot Beach, Apple Orchard, McKendree, Todd Beach, Southside Junction, Piney Creek, Dowdy Creek, Nuttallburg, Keeney Creek, Kaymoor, Short Creek, the Lower Railroad area, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible</li> <li>■ Effort would be aimed at securing legal crossings where illegal crossing occur most frequently (as in Alternative 1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible</li> <li>■ Effort would be aimed at securing legal crossings where illegal crossing occur most frequently (as in Alternative 1)</li> <li>■ Effort would also be aimed at securing legal crossings where needed for new visitor facilities, such as for the new developed campground at Terry Beach and for the through park trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible</li> <li>■ Effort would be aimed at securing legal crossings where illegal crossing occur most frequently (as in Alternative 1)</li> <li>■ Effort would also be aimed at securing legal crossings where needed for new visitor facilities, such as for the new developed campground at Terry Beach and for a rim to river trail along Fire Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would continue to work with the CSX Corporation to acquire additional legal crossings of the CSX rights-of-way in the park wherever possible</li> <li>■ Effort would be aimed at securing legal crossings where illegal crossing occur most frequently (as in Alternative 1)</li> <li>■ Effort would also be aimed at securing legal crossings where needed for new visitor facilities, such as for the new developed campground at Terry Beach, for the through park connector, for a rim to river trail</li> </ul>

Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
	Fayette Station				along Fire Creek, for a rim to river trail from GW Carver to Keeney Creek
<b>Access and Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New River Parkway would be developed by the WV DOT from I-64 to Hinton</li> <li>■ Trailhead parking would be provided at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made to Turkey Spur Road at Grandview</li> <li>■ NPS would work cooperatively with WV DOH to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implement traffic calming measures on WV SR 41 near McCreery</li> <li>- improve Fayette Station Road (widen, add pull-outs, other actions)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New River Parkway would be developed by the WV DOT from I-64 to Hinton</li> <li>■ Trailhead parking would be provided at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made to Turkey Spur Road at Grandview</li> <li>■ NPS would work cooperatively with WV DOH to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implement traffic calming measures on WV SR 41 near McCreery</li> <li>- improve Fayette Station Road (widen, add pull-outs, other actions)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ An alternative transportation system with a concession-based shuttle would be implemented during peak visitation periods on Fayette Station Road to alleviate congestion</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made at the Fayette Station parking area above the CSX right-of-way to address private paddler needs</li> <li>■ Parking facilities would be developed to address parking needs in the Bubba City, Junkyard, Ambassador, Keeney Creek, Dowdy, Bluff, and Polls areas (where boundary adjustments are proposed)</li> <li>■ New trailheads with parking would be provided for all new trails</li> <li>■ Access would be enhanced at sites in the south end of the park:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- visitor parking would be added at Trump-Lilly Farm</li> <li>- visitor parking would be expanded at Sandstone Falls</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Access would be enhanced in the north end of the park:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a new park road would be built in the Alabama area to access climbing areas and a new campground</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New River Parkway would be developed by the WV DOT from I-64 to Hinton</li> <li>■ Trailhead parking would be provided at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made to Turkey Spur Road at Grandview</li> <li>■ NPS would work cooperatively with WV DOH to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implement traffic calming measures on WV SR 41 near McCreery</li> <li>- improve Fayette Station Road (widen, add pull-outs, other actions)</li> <li>- improve McKendree Road and to designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ An alternative transportation system with a concession-based shuttle would be implemented during peak visitation periods on Fayette Station Road to alleviate congestion</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made at the Fayette Station parking area above the CSX right-of-way to address private paddler needs</li> <li>■ Parking facilities would be developed to address parking needs in the Bubba City, Junkyard, Ambassador, Keeney Creek, Dowdy, Bluff, and Polls areas (where boundary adjustments are proposed)</li> <li>■ New trailheads with parking would be provided for all new trails</li> <li>■ Access would be enhanced at sites in the middle of the park:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parking areas would be expanded at the Glade Creek trailhead, the McCreery river access, and the Thayer campground and river access</li> <li>- a new park road would be built in the Highland-Backus area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New River Parkway would be developed by the WV DOT from I-64 to Hinton</li> <li>■ Trailhead parking would be provided at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made to Turkey Spur Road at Grandview</li> <li>■ NPS would work cooperatively with WV DOH to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WV SR 41 near McCreery</li> <li>- improve Fayette Station Road (widen, add pull-outs, other actions)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ An alternative transportation system with a concession-based shuttle would be implemented during peak visitation periods on Fayette Station Road to alleviate congestion</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made at the Fayette Station parking area above the CSX right-of-way to address private paddler needs</li> <li>■ Parking facilities would be developed to address parking needs in the Bubba City, Junkyard, Ambassador, Keeney Creek, Dowdy, Bluff, and Polls areas (where boundary adjustments are proposed)</li> <li>■ New trailheads with parking would be provided for all new trails</li> <li>■ Access would be enhanced at sites above the rim:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- visitor parking would be added at Trump-Lilly Farm</li> <li>- a new park road would be built in the Highland-Backus area providing access to new trails in the plateau area and a new campground</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ At Cunard, capacity issues would be addressed by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expanding the existing private paddler parking area</li> <li>- adding new private</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New River Parkway would be developed by the WV DOT from I-64 to Hinton</li> <li>■ Trailhead parking would be provided at the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made to Turkey Spur Road at Grandview</li> <li>■ NPS would work cooperatively with WV DOH to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve Fayette Station Road (widen, add pull-outs, other actions)</li> <li>- improve McKendree Road and designate it a state scenic backway</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ An alternative transportation system with a concession-based shuttle would be implemented during peak visitation periods on Fayette Station Road to alleviate congestion</li> <li>■ Improvements would be made at the Fayette Station parking area above the CSX right-of-way to address private paddler needs</li> <li>■ Parking facilities would be developed to address parking needs in the Bubba City, Junkyard, Ambassador, Keeney Creek, Dowdy, Bluff, and Polls areas (where boundary adjustments are proposed)</li> <li>■ New trailheads with parking would be provided for all new trails</li> <li>■ Access would be enhanced in remote areas where opportunities for exploration experiences occur:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- visitor parking would be added at Richmond-Hamilton Farm</li> <li>- parking would be expanded at Sandstone Falls, the Gwinn Ridge trailhead, the Glade Creek trailhead, the Thayer campground and river access, and the Brooklyn day use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At Cunard, capacity issues would be addressed by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expanding the existing private paddler parking area</li> </ul> </li> <li>adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road</li> </ul>	<p>providing access to new trails in the plateau area and a new campground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At Cunard, capacity issues would be addressed by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expanding the existing private paddler parking area</li> <li>adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road</li> </ul> </li> <li>adding a new river access at Surprise</li> </ul>	<p>paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implementing an alternative transportation system with a concession-based shuttle during peak visitation periods primarily for private paddlers and other visitors</li> </ul>	<p>area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At Cunard, capacity issues would be addressed by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expanding the existing private paddler parking area</li> <li>adding new private paddler parking along the Fisherman's Trail access road</li> <li>implementing an alternative transportation system with a concession-based shuttle during peak visitation periods primarily for private paddlers and other visitors</li> <li>expanding parking for fishermen and private boaters at Brooklyn</li> </ul> </li> <li>If after making access improvements at Cunard (see Access and Parking above), visitor crowding issues during peak visitation periods are still not adequately address, then consider adding a new river access at Surprise</li> </ul>
<b>Other Visitor Facilities (including disabled access)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hiking trails, parking, and comfort stations would be added in the Nuttallburg Visitor Use Area</li> <li>As part of the New River Parkway project, the WV DOH would develop:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>boat and river access facilities at Mermaid Beach</li> <li>parking at Longbottom Overlook</li> <li>parking and picnicking facilities at the Fall Branch access</li> <li>visitor access and parking facilities at Richmond-Hamilton, Vallandingham, and Cochran Farms</li> </ul> </li> <li>As part of the Burnwood Center project, improvements to visitor facilities would include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rehabilitation of existing picnic shelters</li> <li>construction of a new environmental education building</li> </ul> </li> <li>NPS would continue to make accessibility improvements at existing and new facilities with the goal of making all visitor facilities at developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing primitive campground at Stone Cliff would be closed and the site restored; a new campground and picnicking facilities developed at the Stone Cliff bench level</li> <li>All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities</li> <li>Visitor facilities would be enhanced at sites in the south end of the park:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>existing facilities at Brooks Falls would be improved</li> <li>a new comfort station would be added at Sandstone Falls</li> <li>Camp Brookside would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused (in partnership with an educational institution)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Visitor facilities would be enhanced at sites in the north end of the park:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a new developed campground would be provided in the Alabama area</li> </ul> </li> <li>In the middle of the park day-use facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new developed campground would be provided at Meadow Creek West, including a new river access</li> <li>The existing primitive campground at Stone Cliff would be closed and the site restored; a new campground and picnicking facilities developed at the Stone Cliff bench level</li> <li>All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities</li> <li>Visitor facilities would be enhanced at sites in the middle of the park on both sides of the river:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on river left, camping opportunities would be provided along the through park trail, including: 1) expansions to existing primitive campgrounds, 2) addition of several groups of designated backcountry campsites, and 3) a new developed campground at Terry Beach</li> <li>on river right, new camping opportunities would be provided including: 1)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new developed campground would be provided at Meadow Creek West, including a new river access</li> <li>The existing primitive campground at Stone Cliff would be closed and the site restored; a new campground and picnicking facilities developed at the Stone Cliff bench level</li> <li>All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities</li> <li>Visitor facilities would be enhanced in river gateway areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Prince/McCreery area, new camping opportunities would include: 1) expansions to existing primitive campgrounds, and 2) a new developed campground at Terry Beach</li> <li>in the Thurmond area, the Dun Glen campground would be closed and the existing day-use facilities would be rehabilitated</li> <li>in the Cunard area, new picnicking and parking facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new developed campground would be provided at Meadow Creek West, including a new river access</li> <li>The existing primitive campground at Stone Cliff would be closed and the site restored; a new campground and picnicking facilities developed at the Stone Cliff bench level</li> <li>All practicable efforts would be made to provide access for the disabled at new facilities</li> <li>Visitor facilities would be enhanced in focal areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Upper Gorge Focal Area, new visitor facilities would include: 1) a new developed campground located south of I-64, and 2) Camp Brookside would be rehabilitated and adaptively reused (in partnership with an educational institution)</li> <li>in the Grandview/Prince Focal Area, new camping opportunities would include: 1) a new developed campground at Terry</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
	<p>visitor use areas accessible to visitors and employees with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where practicable given river conditions, NPS would seek to provide river access for disabled boaters that would enable them to experience safe river trips of different lengths and levels of difficulty.</li> </ul>	<p>at Dun Glen would be rehabilitated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River access would be improved, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhancements to the Brooks Falls river access</li> <li>enhancements at Cunard (see Access and Parking above)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accessibility for disabled visitors would be enhanced (as described in Alternative 1)</li> <li>Working cooperatively with WV DOT, provide opportunities for visitors to view and learn about the park from the New River Bridge maintenance catwalk</li> </ul>	<p>expansions to existing primitive campgrounds, 2) addition of several groups of designated backcountry campsites, and 3) a new developed campground in the Highland-Backus area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor facilities would be enhanced at sites in the south and north ends of the park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a new developed campground would be added in the south end of the park</li> <li>a new developed campground would be added in the Burnwood area</li> </ul> </li> <li>River access would be improved, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhancements to improve safety for private paddlers at McCreery</li> <li>enhancements at Cunard (see Access and Parking above)</li> <li>a new river access at Bass Lake</li> <li>a new river access at Meadow Creek West</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accessibility for disabled visitors would be enhanced (as described in Alternative 1)</li> <li>Working cooperatively with WV DOT, provide opportunities for visitors to view and learn about the park from the New River Bridge maintenance catwalk (common to Alts 5)</li> </ul>	<p>would be added at Brooklyn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Canyon Rim/Fayette Station area, a new developed campground would be provided in proximity to climbing areas</li> <li>In the Highland-Backus area, a new developed campground would be added</li> <li>River access would be improved, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>replacement of the McCreery river access with a new river access at Terry Beach</li> <li>enhancements at Cunard (see Access and Parking above)</li> <li>a new river access at Meadow Creek West</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accessibility for disabled visitors would be enhanced (as described in Alternative 1)</li> <li>work cooperatively with the WV DOT to provide tours of the New River Bridge using the bridge's maintenance catwalk</li> <li>Working cooperatively with WV DOT, provide opportunities for visitors to view and learn about the park from the New River Bridge maintenance catwalk (common to Alts 2 to 5)</li> </ul>	<p>Beach and 2) expansions to existing primitive campgrounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Thurmond Focal Area, the Dun Glen campground would be closed and the existing day-use facilities would be rehabilitated</li> <li>in the Lower Gorge Focal Area, new visitor facilities would include: 1) a new developed campground in proximity to climbing areas, 2) a new day use area near the Fayette Station river access, and 3) new picnicking facilities and parking at Brooklyn</li> <li>River access would be improved, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addition of a new river access at Terry Beach</li> <li>enhancements at Cunard, including a possible new access at Surprise (see Access and Parking above)</li> <li>a new river access at Meadow Creek West</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accessibility for disabled visitors would be enhanced (as described in Alternative 1)</li> <li>Working cooperatively with WV DOT, provide opportunities for visitors to view and learn about the park from the New River Bridge maintenance catwalk (common to Alts 2 to 5)</li> </ul>
<b>Sustaining Communities within the Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As funding permits, NPS would continue to acquire properties within communities in the park as they become available from willing sellers</li> <li>At Thurmond, the NPS would develop a community water system and wastewater management system for park use; excess capacity would be made available for the use of private residents in the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general, the NPS would not seek to acquire private land within communities inside the park, including Meadow Creek, Prince/Quinnimont, Backus, Highland, Terry, Thayer, Thurmond, and Hinton</li> <li>Exceptions would occur where a property 1) includes resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park and that require protection, and/c 2) it is needed to implement management actions recommended in the GMP</li> <li>Collaboration between the NPS and these communities would</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general, the NPS would not seek to acquire private land within communities inside the park, including Meadow Creek, Prince/Quinnimont, Backus, Highland, Terry, Thayer, Thurmond, and Hinton</li> <li>Exceptions would occur where a property 1) includes resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park and that require protection, and/c 2) it is needed to implement management actions recommended in the GMP</li> <li>Collaboration between the NPS and these communities would</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general, the NPS would not seek to acquire private land within communities inside the park, including Meadow Creek, Prince/Quinnimont, Backus, Highland, Terry, Thayer, Thurmond, and Hinton</li> <li>Exceptions would occur where a property 1) includes resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park and that require protection, and/c 2) it is needed to implement management actions recommended in the GMP</li> <li>Collaboration between the NPS and these communities would</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general, the NPS would not seek to acquire private land within communities inside the park, including Meadow Creek, Prince/Quinnimont, Backus, Highland, Terry, Thayer, Thurmond, and Hinton</li> <li>Exceptions would occur where a property 1) includes resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park and that require protection, and/c 2) it is needed to implement management actions recommended in the GMP</li> <li>Collaboration between the NPS and these communities would</li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		<p>generally seek to sustain community character, protect resources, and encourage, as appropriate, development of visitor amenities and interpretive media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration priorities for communities entirely within the park would be as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority 1 – Hinton Meadow Creek, and Thurmond</li> <li>- Priority 2 – Prince, Terry, and Thayer</li> <li>- Priority 3 – Backus and Highland</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ At Thurmond, community water and wastewater management systems would be developed to serve both NPS facilities and all existing and new occupied private development</li> </ul>	<p>generally seek to sustain community character, protect resources, and encourage, as appropriate, development of visitor amenities and interpretive media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration priorities for communities entirely within the park would be as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority 1 – Hinton, Meadow Creek, Terry, Backus, Highland, and Thurmond</li> <li>- Priority 2 – Prince and Thayer</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ At Thurmond, community water and wastewater management systems would be developed to serve both NPS facilities and all existing and new occupied private development</li> </ul>	<p>generally seek to sustain community character, protect resources, and encourage, as appropriate, development of visitor amenities and interpretive media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration priorities for communities entirely within the park would be as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority 1 – Hinton, Meadow Creek, Prince, and Thurmond</li> <li>- Priority 2 – Terry, Backus and Highland</li> <li>- Priority 3 – Thayer</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ At Thurmond, community water and wastewater management systems would be developed to serve both NPS facilities and all existing and new occupied private development</li> </ul>	<p>generally seek to sustain community character, protect resources, and encourage, as appropriate, development of visitor amenities and interpretive media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration priorities for communities entirely within the park would be as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority 1 – Hinton, Meadow Creek, Prince, Thayer, and Thurmond</li> <li>- Priority 2 – Terry</li> <li>- Priority 3 – Backus and Highland</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ At Thurmond, community water and wastewater management systems would be developed to serve both NPS facilities and all existing and new occupied private development</li> </ul>
<b>Land Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No boundary adjustments would occur that would add land to the park or that would delete land from the park</li> <li>▪ NPS would continue to respond to all opportunities for negotiation with willing sellers of land within the park boundary as they arise, subject to staff capacity and availability of funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to add approximately 212.5 acres to the park in six areas; additions would address operational and management issues</li> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to delete 75.4 acres from the park in three areas; deletions would eliminate severe operational issues</li> <li>▪ NPS would focus land protection on the highest priority properties still to be protected, such as land that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- includes significant resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park</li> <li>- is needed to implement the GMP</li> <li>- is within the proposed boundary adjustments</li> <li>- is needed for park operations</li> <li>- is in imminent threat of change to non-park uses as a result of private investment</li> <li>- composes a large property whose acquisition would contribute significantly to federal ownership within the park boundary</li> <li>- is within abandoned railroad rights-of-way</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Other land important to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to add approximately 212.5 acres to the park in six areas; additions would address operational and management issues</li> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to delete 75.4 acres from the park in three areas; deletions would eliminate severe operational issues</li> <li>▪ NPS would focus land protection on the highest priority properties still to be protected, such as land that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- includes significant resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park</li> <li>- is needed to implement the GMP</li> <li>- is needed for park operations</li> <li>- is within the proposed boundary adjustments</li> <li>- is in imminent threat of change to non-park uses as a result of private investment</li> <li>- composes a large property whose acquisition would contribute significantly to federal ownership within the park boundary</li> <li>- is within abandoned railroad rights-of-way</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Other land important to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to add approximately 212.5 acres to the park in six areas; additions would address operational and management issues</li> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to delete 75.4 acres from the park in three areas; deletions would eliminate severe operational issues</li> <li>▪ NPS would focus land protection on the highest priority properties still to be protected, such as land that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- includes significant resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park</li> <li>- is needed to implement the GMP</li> <li>- is needed for park operations</li> <li>- is within the proposed boundary adjustments</li> <li>- is in imminent threat of change to non-park uses as a result of private investment</li> <li>- composes a large property whose acquisition would contribute significantly to federal ownership within the park boundary</li> <li>- is within abandoned railroad rights-of-way</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Other land important to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to add approximately 212.5 acres to the park in six areas; additions would address operational and management issues</li> <li>▪ Park boundary would be adjusted to delete 75.4 acres from the park in three areas; deletions would eliminate severe operational issues</li> <li>▪ NPS would focus land protection on the highest priority properties still to be protected, such as land that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- includes significant resources and values that are fundamental or important to the park</li> <li>- is needed to implement the GMP</li> <li>- is needed for park operations</li> <li>- is within the proposed boundary adjustments</li> <li>- is in imminent threat of change to non-park uses as a result of private investment</li> <li>- composes a large property whose acquisition would contribute significantly to federal ownership within the park boundary</li> <li>- is within abandoned railroad rights-of-way</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Other land important to</li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		implementation of GMP Alternative 2 would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- early settlement/ agricultural cultural resources in the south end of the park</li> <li>- industrial and mining town ruins in the north end of the park</li> <li>- sites needed for recreation facilities in the middle of the park</li> <li>- a site for a developed campground in the north end of the park</li> </ul>	implementation of GMP Alternative 3 would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a site for a developed campground in the south end of the park</li> <li>- sites needed for recreation facilities along the through park trail and along other new trails</li> </ul>	implementation of GMP Alternative 4 would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sites needed for recreation facilities along rim to river trails and along other new trails offering visitors experiences in and around river gateways</li> <li>- a site for a developed campground in the north end of the park</li> </ul>	implementation of GMP Alternative 5 would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- early settlement/ agricultural cultural resources in the south end of the park</li> <li>- industrial and mining town ruins in the north end of the park</li> <li>- a site for a developed campground in the south end of the park</li> <li>- sites needed for recreation facilities along the through park connector and along other new trails offering visitors experiences in and around river gateways</li> </ul>
<b>Stewardship of Private Lands within the Park Boundary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would continue to respond to landowner needs and concerns on an individual basis as they arise, seeking to address issues and provide technical assistance where practicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would implement a program to work cooperatively with owners of private land within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship. This program would focus on private lands:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with a history of prior disturbance</li> <li>- with significant fundamental or important resources and values</li> <li>- that are highly susceptible to change</li> <li>- that are of high priority for land protection in Alternative 2 (see above)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would implement a program to work cooperatively with owners of private land within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship. This program would focus on private lands:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with a history of prior disturbance</li> <li>- with significant fundamental or important resources and values</li> <li>- that are highly susceptible to change</li> <li>- that are of high priority for land protection in Alternative 3 (see above)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would implement a program to work cooperatively with owners of private land within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship. This program would focus on private lands:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with a history of prior disturbance</li> <li>- with significant fundamental or important resources and values</li> <li>- that are highly susceptible to change</li> <li>- that are of high priority for land protection in Alternative 4 (see above)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NPS would implement a program to work cooperatively with owners of private land within the park boundary to promote sensitive stewardship. This program would focus on private lands:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with a history of prior disturbance</li> <li>- with significant fundamental or important resources and values</li> <li>- that are highly susceptible to change</li> <li>- that are of high priority for land protection in Alternative 5 (see above)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Relevance of the Park to Local Visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Actions implemented to strengthen the connection between the public and the NPS mission at the park would continue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Additional actions would be implemented to strengthen the connection between the public and the NPS mission at the park, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- aggressively building the capacity of the recently created Friends of New River Gorge group</li> <li>- implementing an "Experience New River Gorge" program</li> <li>- expanding the scope and frequency of environmental education programs</li> <li>- increasing the number of special events in the park and its gateway communities</li> <li>- producing a greater variety of park informational materials</li> <li>- expanding park</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		coverage by local media  - maintaining information kiosks in gateway communities and communities within the park			
<b>Gateway Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal cooperative relationships between the NPS and the park's gateway communities would continue, including provision of some technical assistance with land use planning and GIS database management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work cooperatively with gateway communities to accomplish shared goals</li> <li>Take a leadership role in enhancing civic engagement to promote better understanding and communication between the NPS and its neighbors</li> <li>Make available technical assistance to address issues of mutual concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter into cooperative partnerships to ensure that NPS and gateway communities benefit from one another's actions</li> <li>Take a leadership role in enhancing civic engagement to promote better understanding and communication between the NPS and its neighbors</li> <li>Make available technical assistance to address issues of mutual concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation with Enter into cooperative partnerships to ensure that NPS and gateway communities benefit from one another's actions</li> <li>Take a leadership role in enhancing civic engagement to promote better understanding and communication between the NPS and its neighbors</li> <li>Make available technical assistance to address issues of mutual concern</li> <li>Cooperation with gateway communities, state agencies, and private landowners would seek to develop trail connections among the three national parks units, state parks, rail trails, and other attractions in the region</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Tourism Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work cooperatively on many initiatives with local and regional economic development interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand participation in regional economic development efforts with the goal of achieving a seamless network of regional parks, open spaces, trails, and heritage sites in southern West Virginia that would increase biodiversity and create a greater array of educational and appropriate recreational opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>
<b>Other Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation with Hawks Nest State Park would continue to focus on protecting scenic resources in and around the gorge</li> <li>Cooperation with county and state agencies would continue at existing levels</li> <li>Cooperation would continue with visitor user groups with identifying issues and identification of potential solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation with Hawks Nest and Babcock State Parks would be expanded, with a focus on collaboration regarding resource management, interpretive programs, and visitor facilities</li> <li>Cooperation with county and state agencies would be expanded, with a focus on resource management (particularly water quality management) and land use planning</li> <li>Collaborative partnerships with non-profit and private partners would expand the park's capacity to protect park resources and provide high quality visitor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Alternative 2</li> </ul>

**Table 2.36 Comparison of Alternatives – Summary of Representative Management Actions that could Occur**

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
		<p>interpretation and experiences (such as at Camp Brookside and Thurmond)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation with organized stakeholder groups would be expanded, with a focus on working with those having capacity to assist NPS with resource management, visitor safety, and development of new visitor facilities</li> <li>Cooperation with WV DOT would seek to offer visitor tours from the New River Bridge maintenance catwalk</li> </ul>			
<b>Park Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 160 full-time equivalents would be needed for park operations</li> <li>Existing funding levels for operations would continue; no new sources of funding would be available beyond what currently exists</li> <li>New facilities at Nuttallburg and along the New River Parkway would support efficient park management</li> <li>The level of resource management would be maintained; park staffing would continue to be inadequate to meet minimum needs</li> <li>Land within the park boundary would continue to be acquired without funding to provide for adequate management and law enforcement</li> <li>The current park boundary would continue to be insufficient to support efficient park operations</li> <li>Historic structures would continue to be maintained only on the exterior with no leasing potential</li> <li>Existing staff capacity would continue to limit the park's ability to address the growing variety of partnerships and community relations issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 186 full-time equivalents would be needed for park operations</li> <li>Existing funding levels for operations would continue; new sources of funding would be available as NPS works with local users and visitors to create partnerships that would provide a minor income stream to support park purposes</li> <li>New facilities at Nuttallburg, along the New River Parkway, and elsewhere in the north and south ends of the park would support efficient park management</li> <li>Targeted strategies to protect and improve resources would facilitate active resource management; redirection of park staffing would better enable the park to meet its mission</li> <li>New management zoning would make it easier for park employees to manage land acquired within the park boundary in the absence of additional funding for park operations</li> <li>Rehabilitation and leasing of historic structures would provide a moderate income stream</li> <li>Development of friends groups, improved relationships with user groups, and working with local governments would moderately enhance the park's ability to meet its mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 188 full-time equivalents would be needed for park operations</li> <li>Existing funding levels for operations would continue; new sources of funding would be available as NPS works with local users and visitors to create partnerships that would provide a minor income stream to support park purposes</li> <li>New facilities at Nuttallburg, along the New River Parkway, and in the middle of the park would support efficient park management</li> <li>Targeted strategies to protect and improve resources would facilitate active resource management; redirection of park staffing would better enable the park to meet its mission</li> <li>New management zoning would make it easier for park employees to manage land acquired within the park boundary in the absence of additional funding for park operations</li> <li>Rehabilitation and leasing of historic structures would provide a minor income stream</li> <li>Development of friends groups, improved relationships with user groups, and working with local governments would moderately enhance the park's ability to meet its mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 186 full-time equivalents would be needed for park operations</li> <li>Existing funding levels for operations would continue; new sources of funding would be available as NPS works with local users and visitors to create partnerships that would provide a major income stream to support park purposes</li> <li>New facilities at Nuttallburg, along the New River Parkway, and in the vicinity of river gateways would support efficient park management</li> <li>Targeted strategies to protect and improve resources would facilitate active resource management; redirection of park staffing would better enable the park to meet its mission</li> <li>New management zoning would make it easier for park employees to manage land acquired within the park boundary in the absence of additional funding for park operations</li> <li>Rehabilitation and leasing of historic structures would provide a major income stream</li> <li>Development of friends groups, improved relationships with user groups, and greatly enhanced efforts to work with local governments would significantly enhance the park's ability to meet its mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 189 full-time equivalents would be needed for park operations</li> <li>Existing funding levels for operations would continue; new sources of funding would be available as NPS works with local users and visitors to create partnerships that would provide a major income stream to support park purposes</li> <li>New facilities at Nuttallburg, along the New River Parkway, in the vicinity of river gateways, and in focal areas would support efficient park management</li> <li>Targeted strategies to protect and improve resources would facilitate active resource management; redirection of park staffing would better enable the park to meet its mission</li> <li>New management zoning would make it easier for park employees to manage land acquired within the park boundary in the absence of additional funding for park operations</li> <li>Rehabilitation and leasing of historic structures would provide a major income stream</li> <li>Development of friends groups, improved relationships with user groups, and greatly enhanced efforts to work with local governments would significantly enhance the park's ability to meet its mission</li> </ul>

## 2.16 Comparison of Impacts of the Alternatives

Table 2.37 Comparison of Impacts of the Alternatives

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
Physiography, Geology, and Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>negligible to local long-term minor beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate and adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Floodplains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<p>Without a new river access at Surprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul> <p>With a new river access at Surprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate and beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Aquatic Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate and adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Terrestrial Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
Scenic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>

Table 2.37 Comparison of Impacts of the Alternatives (continued)

Subject	Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)
<b>Archeological Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Landscapes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate and adverse impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Ethnographic Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regional short-term minor beneficial impacts</li> <li>regional long-term minor beneficial impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regional short-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>regional long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regional short-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>regional long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regional short-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>regional long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regional short-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>regional long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Use and Visitor Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>(adverse impacts not identified)</li> </ul>
<b>Park Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term minor to major beneficial impacts</li> <li>local long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Park Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term major beneficial impacts in a few areas of the park</li> <li>local long-term moderate to major adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term major beneficial impacts throughout the park</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term major beneficial impacts throughout the park</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term major beneficial impacts throughout the park</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local long-term major beneficial impacts throughout the park</li> <li>local short-term minor adverse impacts</li> </ul>



## 2.17 Consistency with the National Environmental Policy Act

### 2.17.1 Introduction

The NPS requirements for implementing NEPA include an analysis of how each alternative meets or achieves the purposes of NEPA, as stated in Sections 101(b) and 102(1). Each alternative analyzed in a NEPA document must be assessed as to how it meets the following purposes:

1. Fulfills the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations
2. Ensures for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings
3. Attains the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences
4. Preserves important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintains, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice
5. Achieves a balance between population and resource use that would permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities
6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources

**Alternative 1** would minimally meet the six purposes of NEPA. There would be no new sources of park operating funds, such as from friends groups, donations, or volunteers beyond what currently exists, making it increasingly difficult for declining park staff to meet the park's mission to manage the park leaving it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (Purpose 1). NPS would continue to have difficulty adequately protecting natural, scenic, and cultural resources due to limitations in the numbers of park staff (Purpose 4). The existing level of programming, activities, and enforcement would be maintained and used, with limited construction of new facilities and addition of only a few new programs, as funds allow (Purposes 2, 3, and 5). The park would not provide additional recreational facilities requested by the public during GMP scoping (Purposes 2, 3, and 5). Existing resource management actions – particularly water quality monitoring and management planning to improve water quality in the New River and its tributaries – would continue as they are today with long-term benefits continuing to be limited due to inadequate staffing (Purpose 6).

**Alternatives 2 to 5** would better meet the six purposes of NEPA when compared to Alternative 1. While existing funding levels for operations would continue, new sources of funding would be available as NPS works with local users, park neighbors, gateway communities, and regional economic development interests in collaborative

and innovative ways to improve NPS's ability to meet the park's mission (Purpose 1). Desired conditions would better define for park staff the goals of natural, scenic, and cultural resource management; targeted strategies to protect and improve resources as well as strategic use of partner organizations and others would better meet the park's resource protection goals; staffing would be redirected to areas most likely to create beneficial impacts on resources (Purpose 4). Desired future conditions would also better define for park staff the goals of interpretive and education programs (Purposes 2, 3, and 5). Wastewater management facilities at public sites would enhance the overall visitor experience (Purpose 3). Wastewater management facilities at public sites would enhance the overall visitor experience and improve water quality (Purposes 3, 4, and 5). Existing resource management actions – particularly water quality monitoring and management planning to improve water quality in the New River and its tributaries – would be greatly enhanced resulting in long-term benefits to the park's renewable resources (Purpose 6).

**In Alternative 2**, new sources of funding available as NPS works with its partners would moderately enhance the park's ability to meet its mission and to support targeted resource protection goals (Purposes 1 through 6). Approximately 68.5 percent (49,000 acres) of the park would be managed as unfragmented backcountry forest, preserving a core area within a globally significant mixed-mesophytic forest (Purposes 4 and 6). Historic Camp Brookside and many historic structures at Thurmond would be rehabilitated and leased, enhancing their long-term protection and providing a moderate income stream to support their long-term maintenance (Purposes 4 and 5). The park would provide some additional recreational facilities – concentrated in the north and south ends of the park – as requested by the public during GMP scoping (Purposes 2, 3, and 5).

**In Alternative 3**, new sources of funding available as NPS works with its partners would moderately enhance the park's ability to meet its mission and to support targeted resource protection goals (Purposes 1 through 6). Approximately 43 percent (30,750 acres) of the park would be managed as unfragmented backcountry forest, preserving a core area within a globally significant mixed-mesophytic forest (Purposes 4 and 6). Three historic farmhouses would be rehabilitated and leased, enhancing their long-term protection and providing a minor income stream to support their long-term maintenance (Purposes 4 and 5). The park would provide some additional recreational facilities – concentrated in the middle of the park – as requested by the public during GMP scoping (Purposes 2, 3, and 5).

**In Alternative 4**, new sources of funding available as NPS works with its partners would majorly enhance the park's ability to meet its mission and to support targeted resource protection goals (Purposes 1 through 6). Approximately 60.8 percent (43,500 acres) of the park would be managed as unfragmented backcountry forest,

preserving a core area within a globally significant mixed-mesophytic forest (Purposes 4 and 6). Three historic farmhouses, most historic structures at Thurmond, and the Prince Brother's General Store would be rehabilitated and leased, enhancing their long-term protection and providing a major income stream to support their long-term maintenance (Purposes 4 and 5). The park would provide many of the additional recreational facilities – concentrated in the vicinity in the vicinity of river gateways throughout the park – as requested by the public during GMP scoping (Purposes 2, 3, and 5).

**In Alternative 5**, new sources of funding available as NPS works with its partners would majorly enhance the park's ability to meet its mission and to support targeted resource protection goals (Purposes 1 through 6). Approximately 66.4 percent (47,500 acres) of the park would be managed as unfragmented backcountry forest, preserving a core area within a globally significant mixed-mesophytic forest (Purposes 4 and 6). Historic Camp Brookside, three historic farmhouses, most historic structures at Thurmond, and the Prince Brother's General Store would be rehabilitated and leased, enhancing their long-term protection and providing a major income stream to support their long-term maintenance (Purposes 4 and 5). The park would provide most of the additional recreational facilities – concentrated in the vicinity of river gateways and in focal areas throughout the park – as requested by the public during GMP scoping (Purposes 2, 3, and 5).

#### **2.17.2 Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

In accordance with NPS Director's Order #12, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*, the NPS is required to identify the environmentally preferred alternative in its NEPA documents. The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that best promotes the national environmental policy expressed in NEPA (Section 101(b)) (516 DM 4.10). The *Council on Environmental Quality's Forty Questions* (Q6a) further clarifies the identification of the environmentally preferred alternative stating, "simply put, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural processes."

The NPS has determined that the environmentally preferred alternative is **Alternative 5 (Preferred Alternative)**. This conclusion is based on careful review of potential impacts as a result of implementing the management alternatives and assessing proposed mitigation for cultural and natural resource impacts. Alternative 5 would surpass Alternative 1 in meeting all six NEPA purposes. Collaborative partnerships in Alternatives 4 and 5 would generate new funding sources and volunteer services that would have a major positive impact on resource protection activities. Alternative 5 would preserve only 1,500 fewer acres of unfragmented backcountry forest (47,500 acres total) when compared to Alternative 2 (49,000 acres total) (Purposes 4 and 5). Alternative 5 would

rehabilitate and lease the greatest number of historic structures better protecting their integrity and generating a major income stream for their ongoing maintenance (Purposes 1 and 4). Collectively the management actions in Alternative 5 would better enhance NPS's ability to conserve the scenery, natural and historic resources, and wildlife at New River Gorge National River and to provide for the park's enjoyment in a manner that will leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.